Strawberry Bookmark

Geranium Bookmark

Handkerchief Case

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Book 54

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REVISED EDITION

LINEN STITCHES

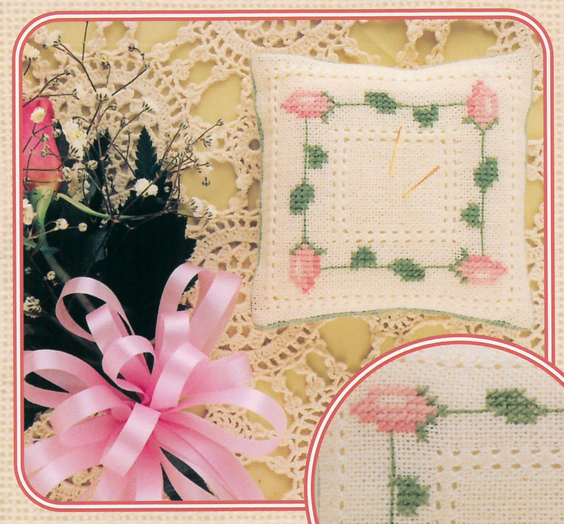
The Textbook for Linen

by Ginnie Thompson

Necessaire

Ringbearer's Pillow

Buttercup Bookmark



Rose Pincushion

Rose Needlecase

Second Printing - Revised Edition
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Ginnie Thompson

is credited with stimulating the current enthusiasm for counted cross stitch in this country. In addition to teaching counted thread techniques to embroiderers throughout the United States, she and her husband, Ken, have taken over 600 stitchers abroad over the past twenty years for further study in Denmark and England. Ginnie credits her teachers from the Danish Handcraft Guild for her teaching techniques and design style. She has authored several books and has been a featured designer in a number of national publications.

Linen Stitches

This book is dedicated to Pat Carson, whose business acumen, administrative abilities and love of cross stitch have been responsible for the spread of American counted cross stitch internationally, with my heartfelt thanks and the thanks of all avid counted thread stitchers.

Graphics by Meg Shinall

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The contents of this book have been prepared and presented in good faith, with every effort to be accurate. However, the possibility of human error, printing mistakes or the variation of individual stitching does exist, and we regret that we cannot be responsible for this.

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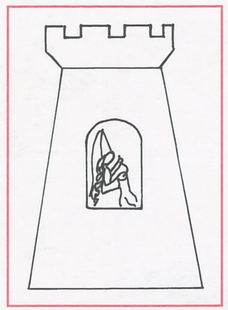
Stitches and Techniques that Enhance Counted Cross Stitch



To be a cross stitcher is to have an ivory tower always accessible. Pick up the magic needle and step into a world where cat litter, scuff marks, auto repairs, and profit and loss statements do not exist. Overweight and split ends are of no consequence, the needleworker becomes a royal personage sitting on a pillow, sewing a fine seam. (Royalty has always practiced needlework.) Strawberries and cream may not be forthcoming unless you personally come forth with them and then they may look more like macaroni and cheese, but the image of magnificence is there in that tiny shaft of steel, in the best supplies you can afford, in the precision of the stitches.

At the moment of the first stitch the needleworker's vision of perfection is unimpaired. When the last stitch is taken the excitement mounts. When pressed and "finished" the embroidery is going to be as fulfilling as the original vision ONLY if the hem does not wobble, the corners do not bunch, margins are crisply turned and invisibly joined, ONLY if the finishing is as assured as the stitches.

The salient feature of counted cross stitch is its easy perfection. Come up in a hole, go down in a hole and all the stitches are precisely even. Follow simple techniques for beginning, ending and carrying threads and the reverse side is as neat as the front. The completed embroidery, when pressed, takes your breath away with its excellence. But then, what? Is it to be a bell pull? a pillow? framed? a book mark? a needlecase? a placemat? Because there is no AUTHORITATIVE TRADITIONAL book on finishing techniques for counted cross stitch, Americans have improvised, sometimes very cleverly. (Danes are born with the knowledge.) Invariably, these newly invented techniques are more complicated and less satisfactory than traditional ways. The results are okay but not outstanding: pot roast when you meant crown roast.

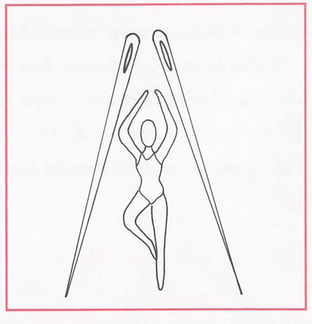
Correct finishing techniques are as simple as correct stitching techniques. Finishing a project should be as enjoyable as beginning one. What we need to know are the traditional methods. Where, after all, do traditions come from? The word tradition comes from the Latin word "tradere" meaning to pass on. In the passing through many hands, many times, techniques are refined to the simplest, most satisfying ways. Evolving over the years, the easiest, best way survives. Easy excellence. This book includes some of these correct, traditional techniques.

Cross stitchers know that counted cross stitch is the answer to everything: world peace, the population explosion, the common cold. (What it does not cure, it alleviates.) As easy and uncomplicated as lacing a shoe, as exalted as poetry, this one stitch produces loving, caring, personal gifts and heirlooms.

And yet – doing one stitch only is like marching; one steps at a steady pace. If the marcher changes rhythm occasionallyand does a few side steps, the march can become a jig, a minuet, a polka, a waltz. If, to the neat mosaic of cross stitch we add a few special pulled thread stitches, the contented cross stitcher becomes a joyous stitcher, the steady march becomes a dance.

Pulled work is different than drawn work. In pulled thread work the threads of the background fabric are pulled together, NO THREADS ARE CUT. In drawn thread work the threads of the background fabric are actually withdrawn, CUT AND REMOVED – an irreversible act. In this book let us timidly begin with pulled thread stitches which are not irrevocable.

Here then is a book to remind us of correct cross stitch techniques, show good finishing techniques and teach pulled thread stitches to enhance cross stitch.



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Basic Cross Stitch on Linen

The magic number for cross stitching on linen is two. The basic stitch on linen is done from left to right, bottom to top, like handwriting, slanting over two threads and up two threads **(Fig. 1)**. Count the THREADS of the linen, not the SPACES. Think of a ladder and count rungs, not holes. This will only be necessary for about three stitches. After that, the eye will begin to see in twos. Should a mistake occur it will be immediately apparent by the slant **(Fig. 2)**.

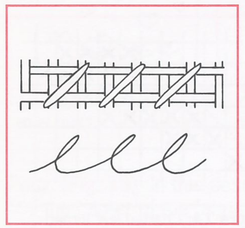

Figure 1: Basic cross stitch

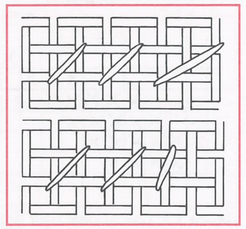

Figure 2: An error made apparent by the slant.

All understitches are made first, all in one direction. Do the understitches of one color area across the row from left to right, then cross back from right to left, even for a row of 2 or 3 stitches **(Fig. 3)**. The reverse side of the work should show small vertical stitches **(Fig. 4 & 6)**. NEVER cross each stitch of a HORIZONTAL row individually, as that technique wastes thread and pads the back. For a row of VERTICAL stitches ONE STITCH wide, each stitch is crossed individually **(Fig. 5)**.

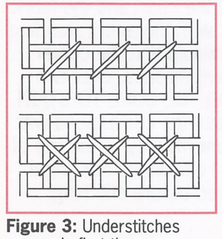

Figure 3: Understitches are made first then overstitches.

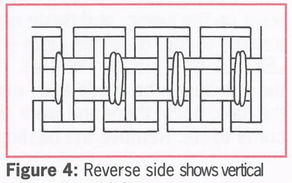

Figure 4: Reverse side shows vertical stitches. (Figs. 4 & 6)

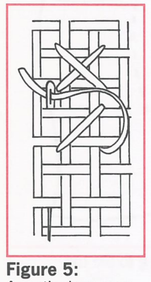

Figure 5:
A vertical row one stitch wide

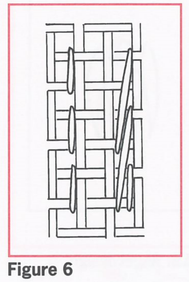

Figure 6

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The back of the cross stitch embroidery should show MOSTLY vertical threads but wherever the chart shows a skipped stitch there will be an X on the reverse side. Wherever the chart shows a stitch out to one side or diagonally there will be a slanted thread on the back. So the reverse side of a cross stitch embroidery may have an occasional slanted or crossed stitch, or an ending thread fastened off horizontally, and still be absolutely correct.

Hoopless Stitching: cross stitch on linen does not require an embroidery hoop. Instead, the hand is held in a relaxed position with the thumb and forefinger grasping the cloth and the little finger anchoring it **(Fig. 7)**. On a tiny piece of fabric it may be necessary to anchor with the ring finger. However, do not sew with the fabric wrapped over only one finger as this may distort the stitches.

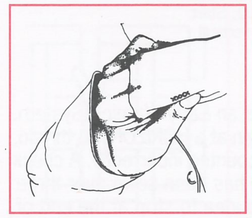

Figure 7:
Hoopless stitching

Use a sewing motion, not a stab stitch. A sewing stitch, one scooping movement in and out, is used with linen. Stitches should be neither loose and sloppy nor so tight that the spaces between the linen threads are enlarged. If a line of light can be seen across the top of a row of stitches, the tension is too tight. Correct tension results in flat stitches that do not distort the background weave.

Knots are never used in counted cross stitch. If tiny, a knot will pull through; if large, it will make a bump. A knotless waste knot is used to start. Here's how: enter from the front side a few inches from the starting place, leaving a tail long enough to thread in the needle later on **(Fig. 8)**. After a few rows have been stitched, rethread the tail and weave it into the backs of several stitches. Subsequent threads may be started in the same way or they may be woven into previously made stitches. Cut closely leaving no short ends. Ends can show through and are unnecessary. Carry threads over no more than TWO STITCHES OR FOUR THREADS of open fabric, as otherwise the thread will be visible from the front.

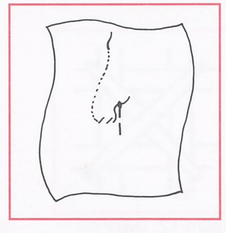

Figure 8: Beginning

Professional Tips (Worth the price of the book!)

Start at a vertical thread. A vertical thread is the thread going north and south, over the horizontal thread running east and west. The first stitch and all subsequent regular stitches should begin at a VERTICAL thread **(Fig. 9)**. Why? The vertical threads (shaded in the diagram) act as little goal posts, upholding the understitch and making the prettiest possible stitch.

The opening is larger just to the left of a vertical thread **(or southwest of a vertical thread, to say it another way -- Fig. 10)** so that this place to begin is easier to find.

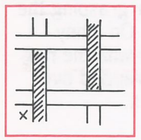

Figure 9: Vertical thread

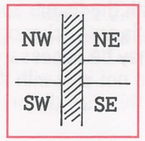

Figure 10: Start SW of a vertical thread.

Starting at a vertical thread acts as an Early Warning System. Should a regular stitch suddenly begin at a HORIZONTAL thread, it is a sign that threads have been counted incorrectly. A check will reveal that a stitch somewhere has been sewn over three threads instead of two. It is a good idea to stop at the end of each row before making the return overstitches and to check the last stitch. Is it by a vertical thread?

This one technique can do more than any other to make your stitching and counting prettier and easier. Counting is really unnecessary; just stitch from big hole to big hole. Three excellent reasons for starting at a vertical thread are: 1) a prettier stitch; 2) a larger hole; 3) an early warning system.

Where to Start

Most designers indicate the center of the chart with an arrow or "c" or some other mark. This is useful information but it does not mean you MUST start in the center. Before beginning any new cross stitch take time to study and decide the best way to stitch that particular piece.

Remember that it is possible to turn cross stitch 180 degrees (completely upside down). Here is an understitch, correctly made, left to right **(Fig. 11)**.

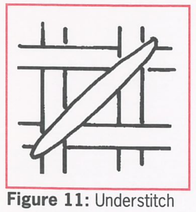

Figure 11: Understitch

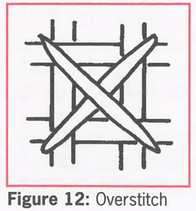

Figure 12: Overstitch

Turn this page upside down and it is still an understitch left to right.

Now the overstitch, right to left **(Fig. 12)**. Turned upside down, this too, is correct. Using this possibility of turning work **(180 degrees, never 90)** can greatly help you in planning your procedure.

Here is a leaf **(Fig. 13)**.

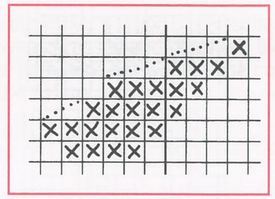

Figure 13: Charted leaf right side up

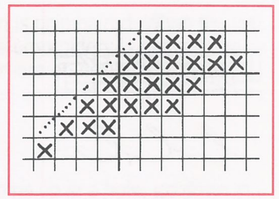

Figure 14: Charted leaf turned upside down

Working the leaf as it is in the illustration means long jumps of thread to the left to begin each row. Turn the leaf 180 degrees and there are no long thread jumps at all **(Fig. 14)**.

Work downward. Turn your work 180 degrees but never 90 degrees. Using these rules let's talk about four examples.

One. (Fig. 15) The arrows indicate the center. Matching the fabric center to the centerstitch, I know the angel will be correctly positioned. But it means beginning at her tummy button and working down, then turning the chart and the fabric upside down and doing the remainder with the angel standing on her head. Not much fun! Instead, I would find the center point on the fabric, and baste under two threads, over two threads to the top of the cloth **(Fig. 16)**. BE SURE TO START LEFT OF A VERTICAL THREAD. The bastings correspond with the stitches to be made and I can count my way to the top of the halo, begin there and work down. I can watch the angel come to life. Remove the basting thread before stitching.

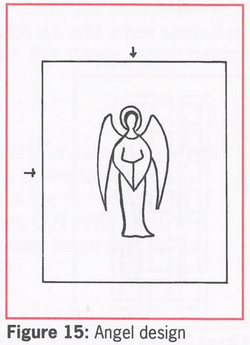

Figure 15: Angel design

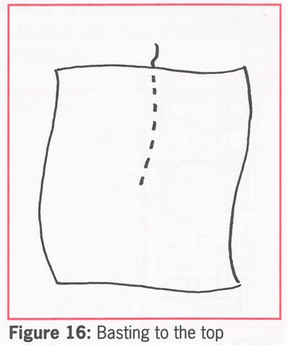

Figure 16: Basting to the top

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Two. (Fig. 17) On this design I would start at the center motif, then everything else is related and easy to count.

Three. (Fig. 18) This design has a border and instructions that say start the border in 2" and down 2". But I am afraid I will eventually have a cow hanging out over the border. I would prefer to begin in the center and eventually put a border around the whole.

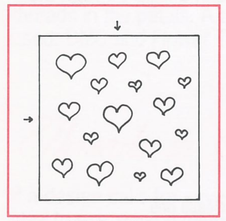

Figure 17: Starting at a center motif

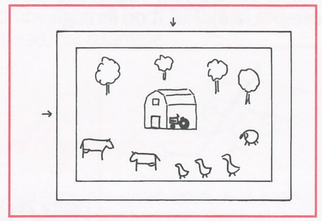

Figure 18: Starting at the center of the chart

Four. (Fig. 19) In this design I would find the center of the fabric by folding and creasing. Find the center of the chart by following the arrows and begin basting at a vertical thread but basting DOWNWARD to the vase. I would work the vase and then, TURNING THE CHART AND TURNING THE FABRIC, work the stem and blossom. Now once again, turning 180 degrees, I would stitch the bud and leaves.

The main point here is to take a few minutes to plan your approach.

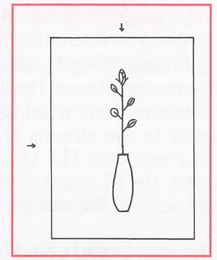

Figure 19: Starting down from the center of the chart

Stitch Variations

Linen, because it provides four threads of background fabric per stitch, allows a certain flexibility not found in cotton fabric. The variations are: a 3/4 stitch **(Fig. 20)**, horizontal and vertical rectangular stitches **(Figs. 21 & 22)**, and a displaced stitch **(Fig. 23)**.

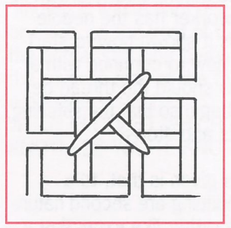

Figure 20: A 3/4 stitch

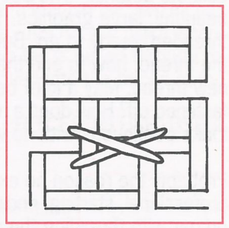

Figure 21: Horizontal rectangular stitch

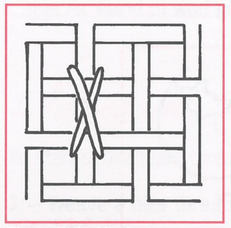

Figure 22: Vertical rectangular stitch

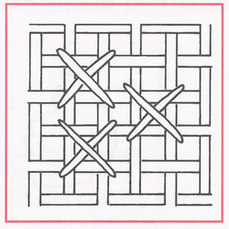

Figure 23: Displaced stitch

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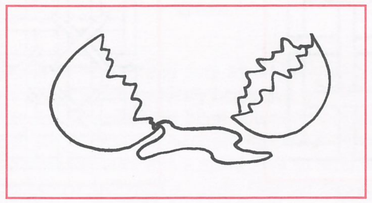
Basic Techniques, Rarely Explained (Read to see how many you practice)

Starting, Continuing, Ending Threads

The needleworker learning an unfamiliar stitch from a book can accumulate frustrations the way a navy suit collects dog hair. The book shows the stitch, clearly drawn in beautiful, large graphics. The needleworker has the needle threaded, ready to go. But nowhere is it shown how to start the thread, how to end the thread or how to continue with a new thread. May a knot be used? How should the thread be fastened off? How does a new thread begin so that the stitching looks continuous with no visible starts and stops?

Probably the reason no explanation is given is that, to a professional, starting, ending, and continuing are second nature on par with threading the needle. It is rather like expecting a cookbook to explain how to separate eggs every time a recipe calls for egg whites. There must always be a time when a novice does not know how to obtain egg whites, or how to correctly begin, continue, or end a thread. This book therefore, will be VERY basic, ALWAYS explaining how to break an egg.



Threading the Needle

(read and be surprised)

To thread the needle, the standard means of using a needle threader or "lick and push" or pinching the thread over the needle then pushing through the eye, are okay. Watch out for lipstick on the thread! An alternative is to "needle the thread." This works only when using one strand of thread such as a strand of flower thread. Lay the thread over the forefinger of the non-sewing hand **(Fig. 24)**.

Align the eye of the needle with the thread **(Fig. 25)**.

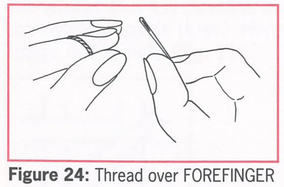


Figure 24: Thread over FOREFINGER

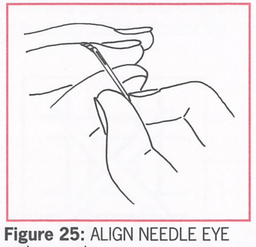


Figure 25: ALIGN NEEDLE EYE and press down.

Press the eye of the needle down so that the thread is pushed up into the eye. Release one end of the thread and pull the needle toward you. The thread will rise in a loop through the eye **(Fig. 26)**. Pull it on through.

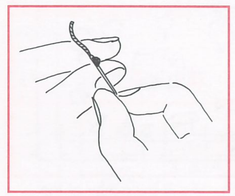


Figure 26: Release one end and pull needle.

Explanation of Supplies Required

The flower thread used in the projects in this book is Ginnie Thompson Flower Thread. It is matte finished, not shiny. It simulates hand dyed vegetable colors, and one thread is equal to two strands of DMC or similar floss. Therefore on 28 count linen (14 stitches per inch) only one strand is used. On 18 count linen (9 stitches per inch) two strands are used in the needle.

The linen thread called for is Ginnie Thompson Linen Thread. It is available in three colors: white, ivory, and natural and in three weights: 50/2 (fine), 35/2 (medium), and 20/2 (heavy).

A blunt tapestry needle is required for counted thread stitching. Numbers, 24, 25, 26, and 28 are the sizes used, number 24 being largest and 28 being finest.

Preparation of the Fabric

The fabric may be prepared by overcasting the edges **(Fig. 27)** or by turning down the edge one turn and basting **(Fig. 28)**. The second method is best if the fabric is very stiff. Do not tape the edges.

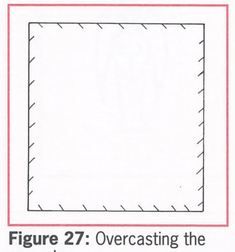


Figure 27: Overcasting the raw edge

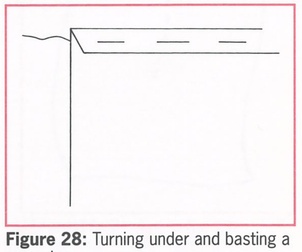


Figure 28: Turning under and basting a raw edge

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Thread Weight

To judge how many threads to use in the needle, pull a raveling thread from the fabric. The thread in the needle should feel the same weight as the raveling thread. This is the minimum amount so the stitching will not look skimpy. More thread can be added if more texture is desired. A combination of textures may be used: three flower threads in the center of the flower, two threads in the petals. A combination of kinds of thread may be used: DMC and Flower Thread, for example.

Threads in Abeyance

If a design calls for several colors in a given area, it is a good idea to use several needles, one for each color. The trick is to keep the threads that are not in use on the front side of the embroidery, NEVER behind where they can tangle or be caught in other stitches. Do not work the last overstitch of a color. Instead park the thread on the front and up out of the way (you are always working downward) until you are ready to continue with that color. You then start by finishing the last stitch **(Fig. 29)**.

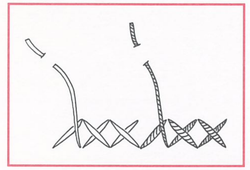

Figure 29: Threads in abeyance

The Beginning Thread

Here are the standard choices –

1 – A common beginning is to use a thread with a knot in the end. Forget this when working on evenweave fabric. A tiny knot will pull through the fabric, a larger knot will make a bump **(Fig. 30)**.

Figure 30: Never knot

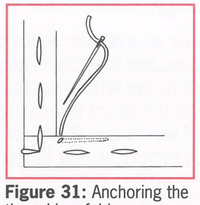

Figure 31: Anchoring the thread in a fold

2 – A "sometimes" choice is to lay the tail of the starting thread in a fold of the fabric, such as a hem, with the intention of anchoring this tail with subsequent stitches **(Fig. 31)**. To keep the thread tail in place until the stitches are made, secure it with a tiny stitch over one thread of the background fabric.

3 – If you are using two strands of thread in your needle, a good choice may be a loop knot. This technique is especially appropriate when a design calls for only a few stitches – an eye, a bud. Put the two cut ends (or the loop end) in the eye of the needle leaving a loop (or tails) at the other end. Bring the needle up in the correct place, make the stitch and go through the loop on the backside **(Fig. 32)**. This is not a good technique when using wool yarn. Wool yarn so obviously has a "direction" that it should not be doubled, as one strand of it will then be like pushing a broom through a knot hole the wrong way.

4 – MOST STITCHES on evenweave fabric will begin with a "knotless" waste knot **(Fig. 33)**. Leave a longish tail, two inches or more, on the front of the embroidery ABOVE the place where the actual stitching begins. Later, this tail is pulled through to the reverse side of the fabric and woven into the backs of the embroidery stitches.
WHEN IN DOUBT WHICH OF THESE CHOICES TO USE, USE A KNOTLESS WASTE KNOT.

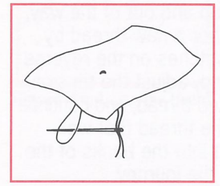

Figure 32: A loop knot beginning

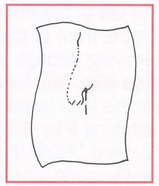

Figure 33: A knotless waste knot

Subsequent Stitches

To start subsequent threads there are three choices –

1 – Weave a new thread into the backs of existing stitches **(Fig. 34 & 35)**.

2 – Use a knotless waste knot. Work the tail in later **(Fig. 33)**.

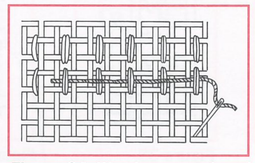

Figure 34: Weaving a new thread into the back of existing stitches (Figs. 34 & 35)

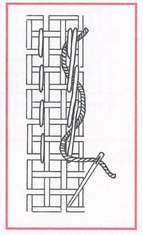

Figure 35

3 – Run a new thread through the backs of existing stitches, actually piercing the thread of those stitches **(Fig. 36)**. This last requires a thread of the thickness of Ginnie Thompson Flower Thread. Piercing the thread has the advantage of keeping the new thread slightly away from the surface of the fabric. This would be a good way to run a black thread through a row of pink stitches, for instance.

WHEN should the tail of the beginning thread be worked into the backs of existing stitches? As soon as possible. A good plan is to work in loose ends in pairs. Weave in the ending thread, then go back and weave in the starting thread. Too many loose tails, even though they are on the front of the work, can be an opportunity for a tangle. Also an embroidery that is kept clean and neat as it progresses gives pleasure at every stage, whereas lots of bristly tails give a 3 day Miami Vice beard effect.

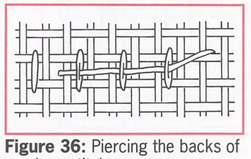

Figure 36: Piercing the backs of previous stitches

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Park & Stitch
(Making a continuous stitch)

Some stitches eat up so much thread that it would be impossible to carry enough thread in one needleful to complete the necessary number of stitches. Yet it is important to make stitches look continuous with no apparent stops and starts.

The rule is to END A THREAD IN THE DIRECTION OF THE JOURNEY (the direction of the stitching). Not to do so could enlarge an intersection by pulling in two directions.

But suppose you are chain stitching and running out of thread? There are no stitches in the direction of your journey! Therefore, make your last loop a big one and leave it loose, gently parking the tail of the thread over to one side, up and out of the way, on the front of the fabric **(Fig. 37)**. Anchor a new thread by weaving through the previously made stitches on the reverse side **(Fig. 38)**. Come up in the loose loop, adjust the tension on this loop by pulling the tail of the parked thread, and continue stitching **(Fig. 39)**. Later, go back for the thread that was "parked." NOW it is possible to weave it into the backs of the newly made stitches in the direction of the journey.

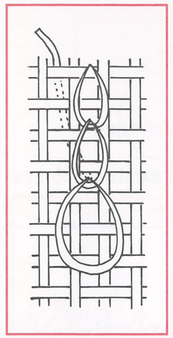

Figure 37

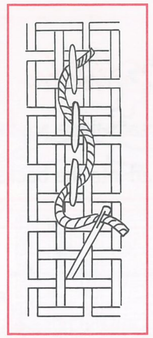

Figure 38

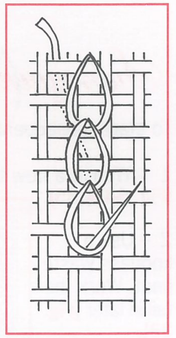

Figure 39

Making a continuous stitch in the direction of the journey

Whenever a stitch calls for two stitches beside each other, using the same holes, (i.e., the Nun's stitch) end with the first of the two stitches and put the thread tail up and out of the way temporarily **(Fig. 40)**. Weave a new thread into the backs of existing stitches and let the second stitch be made with the new thread **(Fig. 41)**.

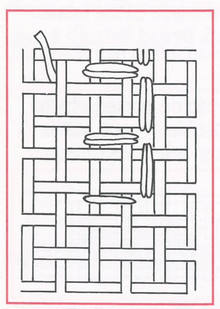

Figure 40: Ending the old thread (first of two stitches)

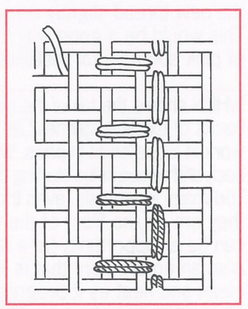

Figure 41: Second stitch is made with the new thread.

To recap then, this is the procedure for embroidery stitches when running out of thread–
PARK the thread that is ending.
WEAVE a new thread through the backs of the previous stitches.
Continue stitching with the new thread.
LATER, end the first thread tail in these new stitches.

The Direction of Sewing

All through seventh grade home economics, my teacher, Miss Grimme, begged, pleaded, and threatened in an effort to teach me to sew TOWARD myself. Sewing away from oneself is ridiculous and results in running after the needle. But I WAS ridiculous, also inept and forgetful. Well, dear Miss Grimme, your genre seems to have faded from the scene and so – I owe you – I will carry the torch. SEW TOWARD YOURSELF, everyone, with the needle pointing toward you **(Fig. 42)**. No one nowadays says to do so, but when learning from a diagram in a book it is usually assumed that you are sewing toward yourself, and always stitching downward. (As a teacher, now, myself, I know this to be an overly optimistic assumption.) There are a few exceptions to this rule, such as hemstitching, but specific directions will be given when such stitches are shown.

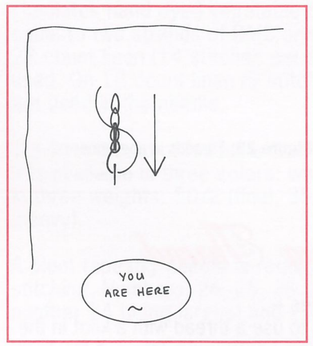

Figure 42: Sewing toward oneself

Counting

Use your needle as a pointer to help you count. If you are cross stitching on linen and the chart indicates a stitch one row down and one stitch to the left, bring the needle's point up from the reverse side at the exact point where the stitch DIRECTLY UNDERNEATH would go. Then, still using the needle's point from behind, count over one thread, two threads **(Fig. 43)**.

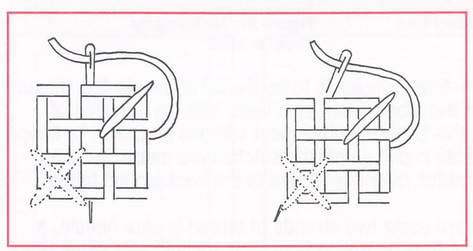

Figure 43: Using the needle point to count over for a diagonal stitch

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Linen Thread

Linen thread is best for pulled thread work because of its strength. A lesser thread that breaks when pulled would be as exasperating as a broken shoelace. However, the resilience of linen thread will cause it to spring back into the hole which was created by pulling threads. So use your finger against the stitches on the back to keep the thread exactly where it should be until the next stitch secures it.

"Your thumb is your handiest tool," says our Danish teacher. Use your thumb to shape and form pulled thread stitches **(Fig. 44)**.

1 – Keep linen thread shorter than your other embroidery thread as it quickly wears, fluffs, and thins as you use it to pull threads together.

2 – Place the needle close to the end of the thread and leave it there while sewing. This way, your stitches do not use that section of thread worn by the needle's eye.

Do not let the rhythm of a stitch seduce you from carefully following the chart. You will some times become so engrossed in creating beautiful stitches in sequence that you find you have created far more than the pattern calls for.

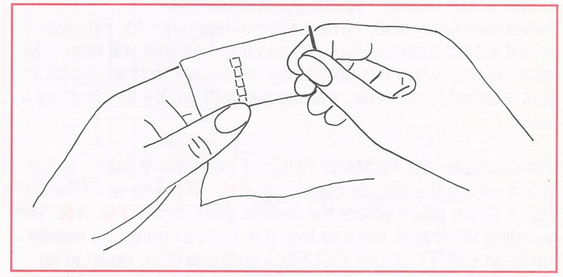
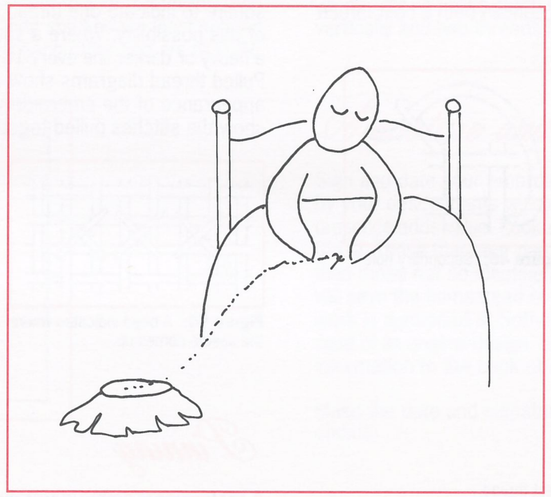


Figure 44: Using the thumb to shape a stitch



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Counted Thread Spoken Here

Computer users have a language, a vernacular.
Lawyers speak a particular idiom.
Businessmen love their wordy jargon.
Government workers speak governmentese.
Needleworkers, also, have a special language for initiates. It is not a secret idiom, though, and it is one that will help – all else failing – when it is absolutely necessary to read directions. It is a sensible, specific, vernacular with words as clean as a bone.

For example, the PRIMARY HOLE of evenweave fabric is the place where the needle comes up **(Fig. 45)**. The SECONDARY HOLE is the place where the needle goes down **(Fig. 46)**. This wording illustrates the rule that it is best to bring the needle up in an EMPTY or UNOCCUPIED space and go down in an OCCUPIED. This way stitches are smoothed down and there is no danger of roughing up a previously made stitch or bringing to the front of the fabric bits of thread. Come up in an empty hole (primary), go down in a full hole (secondary). The thread coming up in a hole all its own is the HOST THREAD but when going to a hole already occupied it becomes the GUEST THREAD **(Fig. 47)**. Eventually, most holes will contain both a host thread and a guest thread.

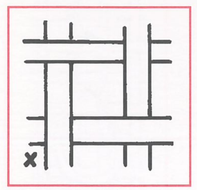

Figure 45: Primary hole

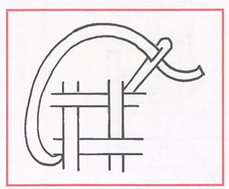

Figure 46: Secondary hole

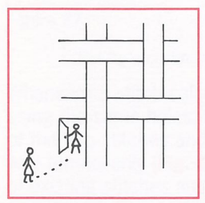

Figure 47: Guest thread

In reading a charted diagram that is numbered **(Fig. 48)** the ODD NUMBER will indicate PRIMARY, HOST, UP THREADS and the even numbers will indicate SECONDARY, GUEST, DOWN THREADS. So: primary = host = odd numbers; secondary = guest = even numbers.

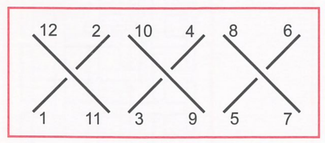

Figure 48: Odd # up, even # down

Warp and weft are words derived from Middle English and refer to the weave of the fabric. Warp threads are those that run lengthwise top to bottom on the fabric and are crossed at right angles by the weft or crosswise threads. Warp is vertical. Weft is horizontal **(Fig. 49)**. An older word for weft is "woof." The background fabric may be referred to simply as GROUND, especially in books by British authors.

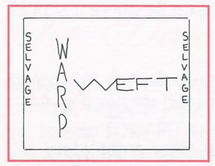

Figure 49: Warp is vertical, weft is horizontal

In reading a diagram, a bead, o, or a small x may show the place where the needle first comes up **(Fig. 50)**. In no way is this a knot. Dotted lines show the direction of the thread on the reverse side **(Fig. 51)**. Shaded stitches may indicate that the fabric is turned or worked in the opposite direction. Look for arrows accompanying shading. Centers are marked by a C or arrow or dot. A square on a cross stitch chart is a stitch. Remember that a linen stitch will be made over two threads. Other charts, especially for pulled thread work, may use a square to indicate one thread. It will be labeled, but be aware of this possibility. Where a square is a stitch, there is usually a heavy or darker line every 10 squares to make counting easy. Pulled thread diagrams show stitches that are unlike the final appearance of the embroidery because the diagrams do not show the stitches pulled together.

Figure 50: A bead indicates where the needle comes up.

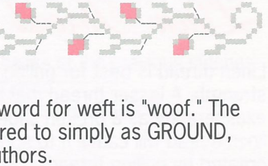

Figure 51: Dotted lines indicate thread direction on back.

Pinning

A professional embroiderer pins at right angles to the line of stitching **(Fig. 52)**. Do not pin parallel to the line of stitching. When basting a hem, baste in the center of the hem away from the stitch line.

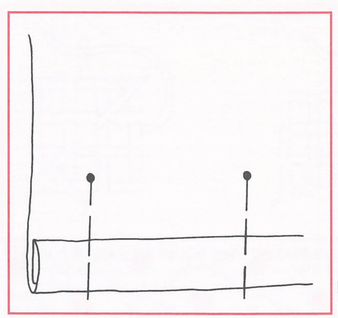

Figure 52: Pinning perpendicularly

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Assembling

A useful generality for assembling finished embroideries (such as a bell pull, needlecase or pincushion) is this: assemble embroideries wrong sides together as they will be when complete. This technique avoids turning embroideries inside out. Specific instructions are included with each project in this book.

Compensation

Pretend you are knotting a fringe, one that extends across a wide hanging. Arbitrarily, you choose the number six for the number of strands in each knot. Not having counted the total number of threads you are not sure you will come out even. So when you are several knots from the end you stop and count. You find you have twenty-five strands of thread left, one thread too many to be divisible by 6. You then tie seven threads in the next bundle, then finish with three sets of knotted 6's.

Or, when hemming you find that your hemstitch over 3 threads each stitch is not going to bring you to the corner of the hem by 3's. You must then do one stitch of four or, preferably, two stitches by 2's. These compensating stitches are least noticed when they are spaced apart from each other and are NOT IN A CORNER **(Fig. 53)**.

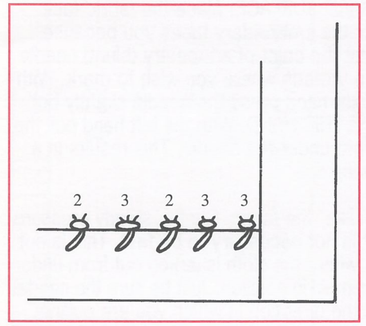

Figure 53: Compensation

Selvages

If the linen or linen-like fabric is absolutely even, both warp and weft, it does not matter where the selvages are. Because true evenweaves are rare, there is a rule that selvages should be vertically on the right and left sides of an embroidery rather than at the top and bottom.

Selvages should always be slashed or removed from an embroidery as the selvage can create a problem by drawing up when laundered. Also, selvages are not meant to be visible, especially in placemats, bookmarks, etc. When the location of the selvage is known (even though eliminated) the top of the embroidery may be indicated by a colored thread or by placing a pin. But what if you have no selvage and no idea where it was? Do this: pull one thread vertically and one thread horizontally and compare them. The vertical thread is more crinkly **(Fig. 54)**. In weaving fabric the vertical threads (warp) are sized or starched to withstand the tension and not snap. The weft threads are not so treated. Just as a starched shirt will crumple more than an unstarched shirt, the warp (vertical) thread that is starched will be more crinkled.

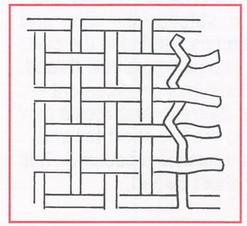

Figure 54: Locating the selvage

Linen Defined

Linen, as a term used in this book, means a fabric composed of single, round threads as opposed to flat, multi-strand, interlocked fabrics such as Aida. Linen techniques, therefore, may be used on pure linen, linen blends, davos, salem cloth 26 ct., etc. A cross stitch on such fabric covers two threads vertically and two threads horizontally.

Signature and Date

Sign and date your embroidery. Your work may be cherished by your descendants without signature and date but their presence adds value. Look at the antique samplers in collections today. Those that bear names and dates are far more valuable than those not so identified. Maybe your signed, dated piece will save the homestead of your great-great grandchild as your work is auctioned at Sotheby's for a phenomenal sum. In the case of an original design, tape the working papers and pertinent information to the back of a framed piece.

Make the date and signature unobtrusive by size and color choice.

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Bonus Technique -- Too Short Thread

Two stitches to go and the thread is running out! Sometimes we over-zealously stitch away until there is an impossibly short tail remaining. Often one is tempted to stitch to the bitter end because there are only a few more stitches needed in the color being used and it seems a shame to start a whole new thread. However we manage to find ourselves in this predicament – here is an easy remedy **(Fig. 55)**. The diagram illustrates a new thread in the needle that loops around the too-short tail and pulls it along so it can be carried to the back and secured. This trick will work to the very end of the short thread.

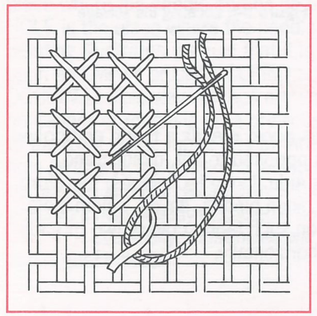

Figure 55: Lassoing a too-short thread

Bonus Technique -- Twisted Thread

To avoid the nuisance and interruption of constantly dangling a twisted thread to untangle it, try giving a slight twist to the needle as you bring the needle forward through the cloth each stitch. Roll the needle in the opposite direction to the undesired twist **(Fig. 56)**. Your fingers will catch on to this trick quicker than your brain. Try it.

When cross stitching with two threads in the needle there is a good trick for making the threads lie flat side by side. Bring the needle up as usual but on the downward stroke put the needle between the two threads **(Fig. 57)**.

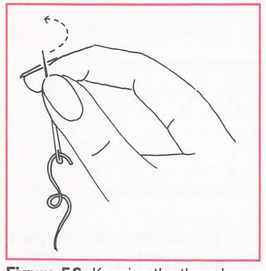

Figure 56: Keeping the thread untwisted

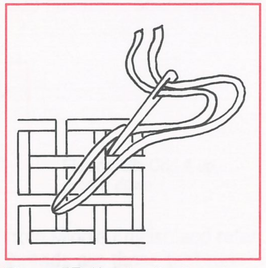

Figure 57: Keeping the threads side by side

Scoring the Fabric

Scoring is an easy-to-learn trick that produces crisp, straight edges or hems.

Imagine that you are faced with the problem of hemming a banquet cloth of evenweave linen. Will you "eyeball" the fold lines? What if you blink? Will you carefully baste the fold line? That seems tedious. Is there any easy way to obtain the perfect hem you desire?

Suppose you are stitching a widely spaced design – say three motifs on a runner. One motif is centered, one at each end. Knowing the importance of having these designs perfectly in line how can you easily mark the starting place each time you begin a motif? The answer to all these questions is a simple technique called scoring **(Fig. 58)**.

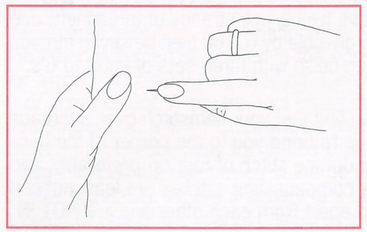

Figure 58: Scoring fabric

To score, work on a HARD SURFACE; place the fabric face down. (Reverse side of the embroidery faces you because hems fold that way.) Put the point of a tapestry (blunt) needle in the channel between threads where you wish to mark. With the forefinger of the right hand press the needle slightly but steadily. DO NOT MOVE THIS HAND. With the left hand pull the fabric away and out from under the needle. This results in a sharp fold line or marking line.

It is not necessary to "rake" the fabric. Gentle, steady pressure is all that is needed. It is not necessary to be fast. This is not the old tablecloth trick where the cloth is jerked out from under the dishes which then remain in position. Just be sure the needle is pointed precisely in the direction in which you are pulling.

KEEP THE LEFT THUMB ON THE LINE OF SCORING WHEN PULLING.

Did the needle slip or did you mark the wrong place? Just do it over again. The scoring line is easily erased by using a little moisture and ironing.

All items pictured in this book were executed using Ginnie Thompson Linen Thread, and Ginnie Thompson Flower Thread (GTFT). DMC equivalents are given on each chart.

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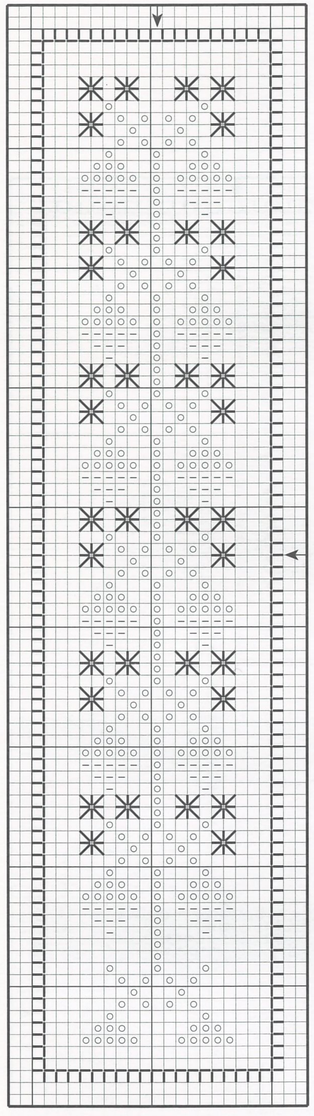
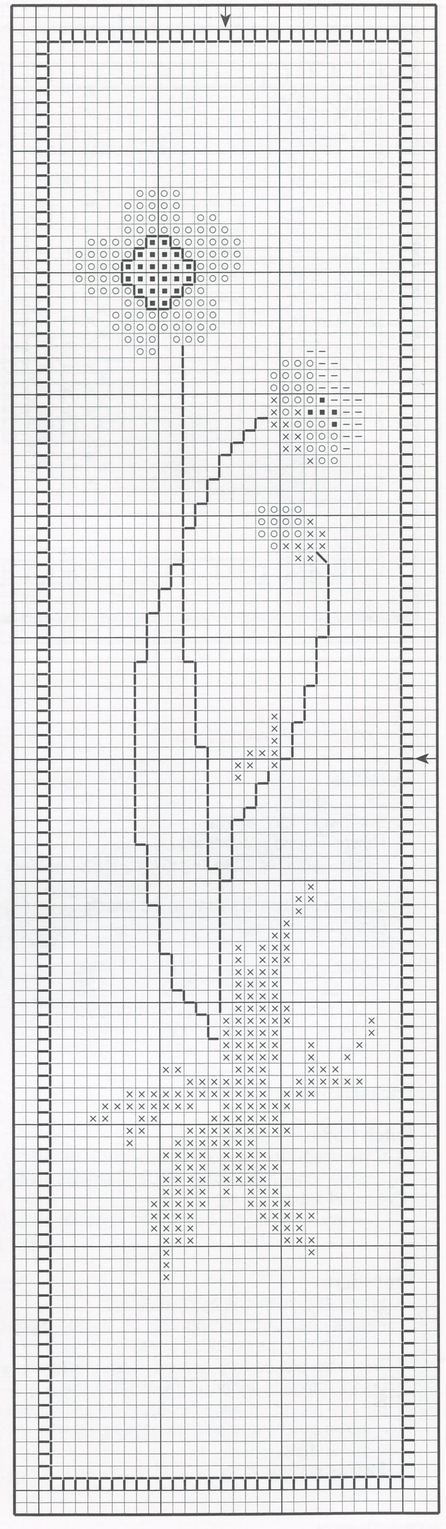


Strawberry Bookmark

Materials:
28 count ivory linen – 4" x 12"
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.
Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

Color	GTFT	DMC
○ Green	466	3052
– Rose	293	891

Stitch Code:
✳ Algerian eyelet (see pg. 28) – use 1 strand of green flower thread (2 strands of DMC).
⊏ Nun's stitch (see pg. 25) – use 1 strand of linen thread in needle over 2 threads of fabric.
Procedure:
Stitch according to chart. Trim fabric from long sides, remove threads top and bottom to form fringe.



Buttercup Bookmark

Materials:
30 count ivory linen – 5" x 12"
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.
Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

Color	GTFT	DMC
– Lt. yellow	330	307
○ Med. yellow	340	444
■ Gold	320	729
× Olive Green	406	730

Backstitch: olive green
Stitch Code:
⊏ Nun's stitch (see pg. 25) – use 1 strand of linen thread in needle over two threads of fabric.
Procedure:
Stitch the design according to the chart.
Trim fabric on long sides.
Remove threads top and bottom to form fringe.

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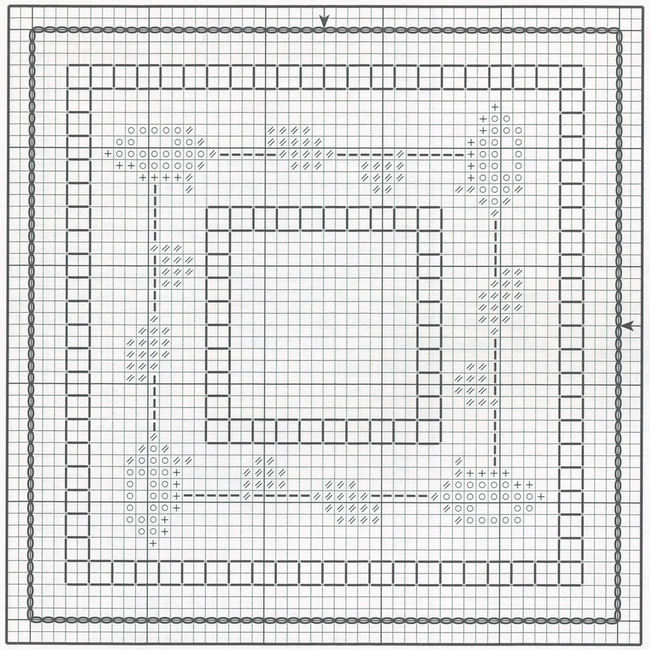

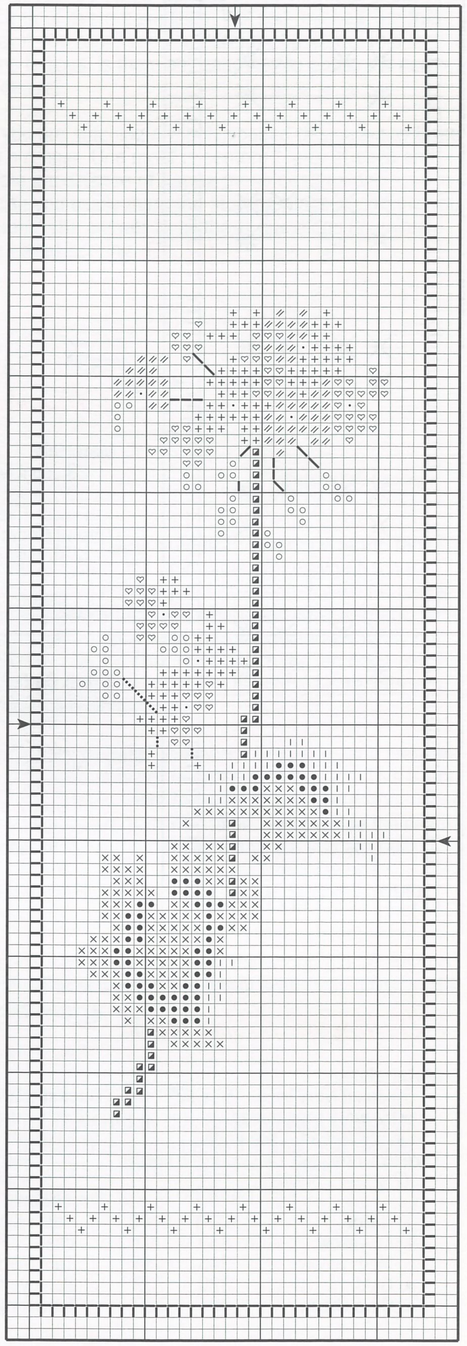

Rose Pincushion

Materials:
28 count ivory linen – 2 pieces, 6" x 6"
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.
Lamb's wool, or other organic material for filler

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

	Color	GTFT	DMC
○	Lt. pink	260	776
+	Dk. pink	275	899
⫽	Green	466	3052
	Aqua	418	503

Backstitch: green

Stitch Code:
0 Chain stitch (see pg. 29) (aqua) – use 1 strand of aqua flower thread in the needle (2 strands of DMC).
▢ 4-sided stitch (see pg. 26) – use 1 strand of linen thread in needle over 4 threads of fabric.

Procedure:
Stitch design on one piece of fabric.
Repeat chain stitch design only on second piece of fabric and press both pieces.
Trim both pieces to $\frac{1}{4}$" around chain stitches.
Fold $\frac{1}{4}$" margins under on chain stitch line.
Put two pieces wrong sides together and overcast chain stitches, leaving an opening on one side for stuffing.
Stuff, and close opening.

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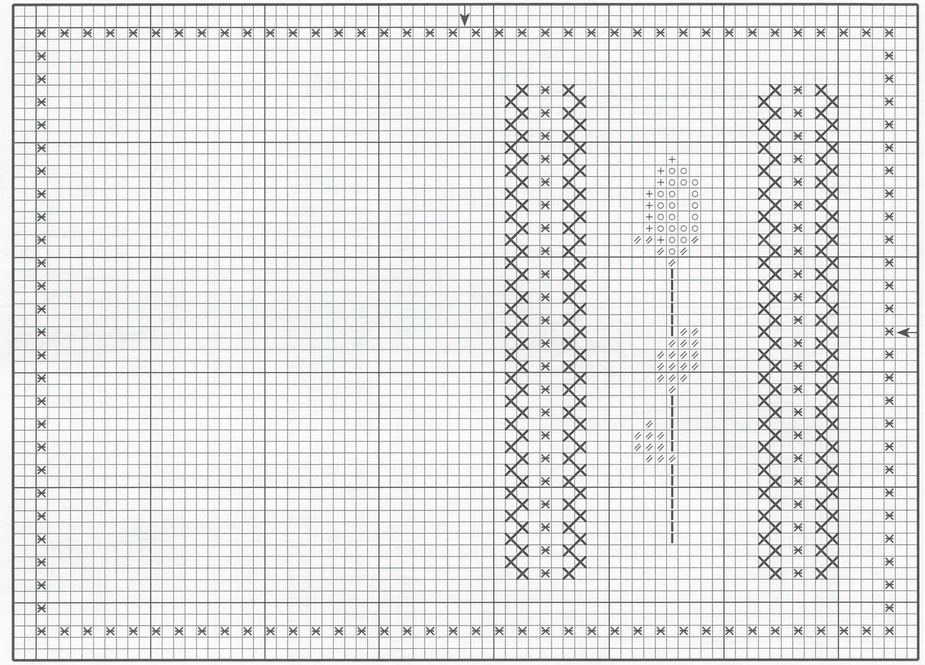

Geranium Bookmark

Materials:
30 count ivory linen – 5" x 11"
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

	Color	GTFT	DMC
○	Pink	275	899
⫽	Coral	293	892
•	Yellow	340	743
×	Med. green	442	906
◪	Forest green	451	987
+	Rose	285	335
♡	Red	296	666
I	Lt. green	430	907
●	Dk. green	421	500

Backstitch:
..... Med. green
– – Forest green

Stitch Code:
⊏ Nun's stitch (see pg. 25) – use 1 strand of linen thread in needle over two threads of fabric.

Procedure:
Complete the design and Nun's stitch according to chart.
Trim away fabric on long sides.
Pull threads top and bottom to form fringe.

Rose Needlecase

Materials:
28 count ivory linen – 2 pieces, 6" x 8"
White outing flannel – $3\frac{1}{4}$" x 5"
White sewing thread
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

	Color	GTFT	DMC
○	Lt. pink	260	776
+	Dk. pink	275	899
⫽	Green	466	3052

Backstitch: green

Stitch Code:
✕ Palestrina knots (see pg. 27) – use 1 strand of linen thread in needle.
✕ Wrapped herringbone (see pg. 30) – use 1 strand of linen thread in needle.

Procedure:
Complete the design as shown on the chart on one piece of linen fabric and press.
Trim to $\frac{1}{4}$" on all sides.
Fold on Palestrina knot edge.
Trim and turn in second piece of linen as liner, making it slightly smaller than the embroidered piece.
Pin wrong sides together and blind stitch with white sewing thread.
Fold in half and add flannel, tack in place at the fold inside.

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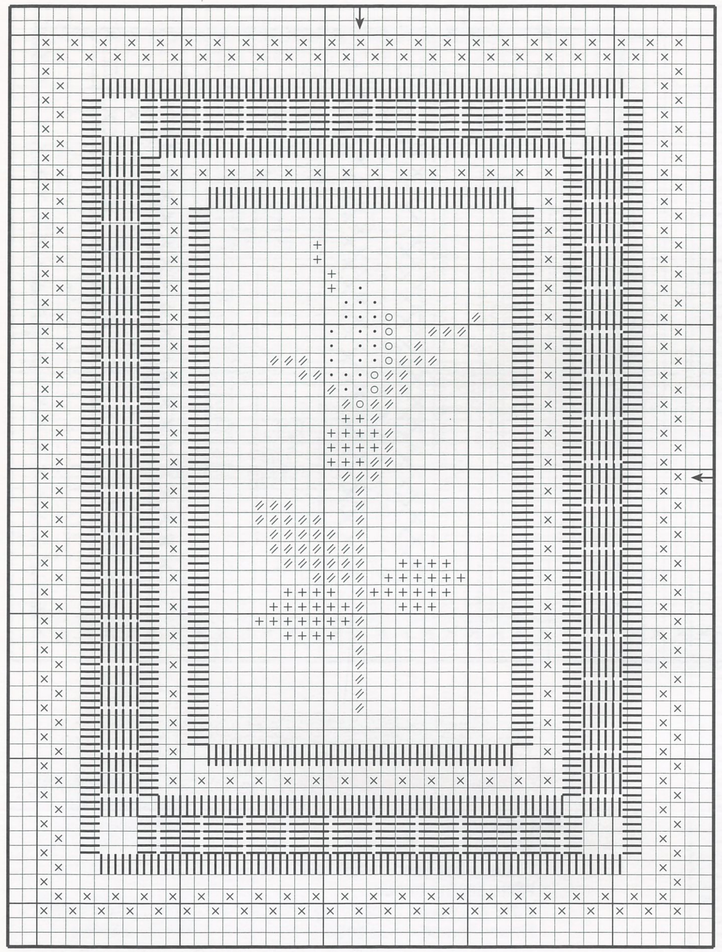
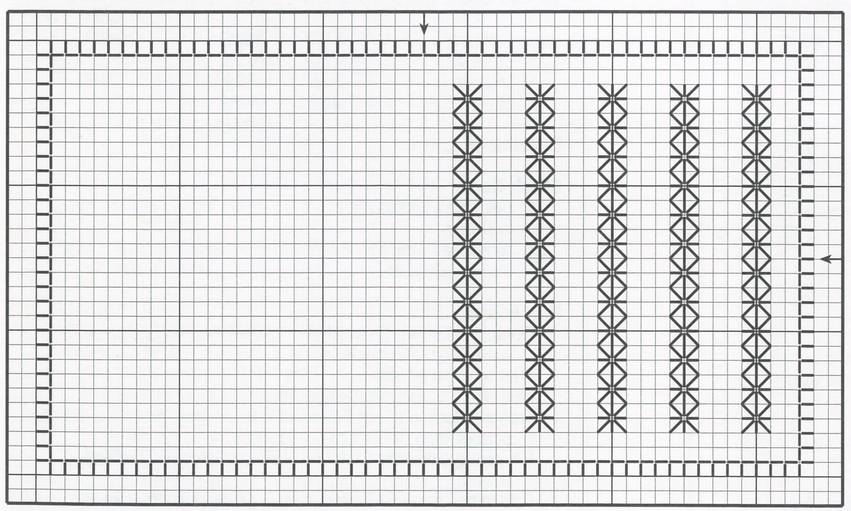


Necessaire Cover



Needlecase

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Necessaire

Materials:

28 count ivory linen
- 2 pieces, 7" x 10"
- 1 piece 5" x 6" (needlecase)
- 1 piece 5" x 5" (scissors strap & thimble pouch)

White outing flannel – 2½" x 4"
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.
Dress snap

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

	Color	GTFT	DMC
×	Aqua	457	503
·	Lt. pink	260	776
○	Dk. pink	275	899
+	Lt. green	448	3348
//	Green	466	3347

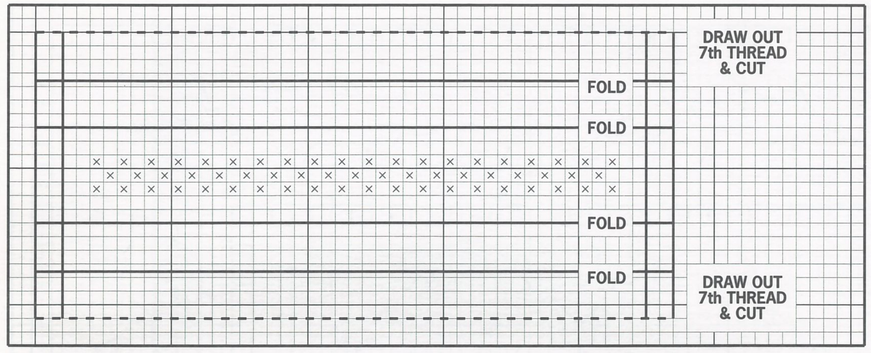
Stitch Code:

||| Pins (see pg. 27) – use 1 strand of linen thread in the needle over 3 threads of fabric. Compensate where necessary.

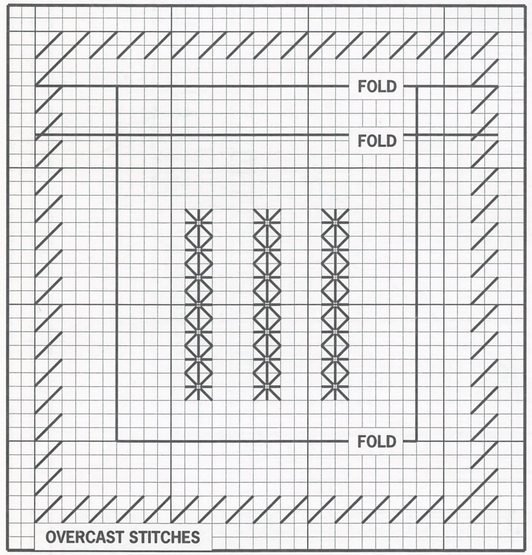
✳ Algerian eyelets (see pg. 28) –use 1 strand of linen thread in the needle.

⊏ Nun's stitch (see pg. 25) – use 1 strand of linen thread over 2 fabric threads.

Braid – use aqua flower thread.



Scissors Strap



Thimble Pouch

Procedure:

On one piece of the 7" x 10" fabric, fold the piece in half to form a "book." Work the design for the cover starting with the left side cross stitch border six threads from the fold and centered top to bottom on the folded fabric.

On the 5" x 6" piece of fabric, complete the embroidery for the needlecase according to the chart. Remove excess fabric. Insert piece of flannel on the inside of the folded needlecase and blind stitch in place at the fold.

On the 5" x 5" piece of fabric, complete the embroidery for the thimble pouch **and** the scissors strap according to the chart. Work the scissors strap at the top of the fabric, allowing enough fabric to turn and finish as indicated on the chart, and work the thimble pouch below. These will be cut apart for finishing and mounting.

Cut apart and finish the thimble pouch and scissors strap. Allow enough fabric to finish the scissors strap according to the diagram. Fold and blind stitch so edges meet. Sew snap at right end. Remove all surplus fabric from the thimble pouch starting at the line of overcast stitches. Fold on scored lines and hemstitch (see pg. 31).

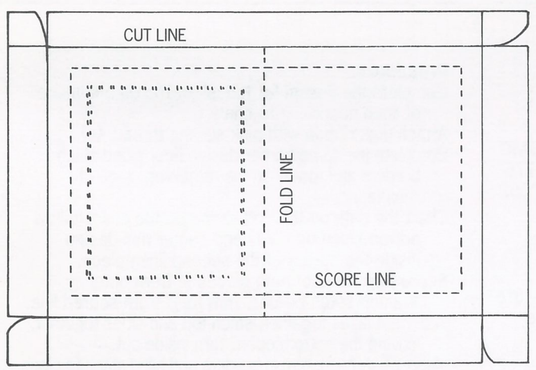
Position and tack these and the finished needle case to the remaining 7" x 10" piece of fabric, as shown and position and attach dress snap for scissors strap.

On the outside piece, score six threads out from the embroidery as shown allowing for the piece to fold evenly in the middle to form a "book." Trim away excess fabric to ½" and turn in.

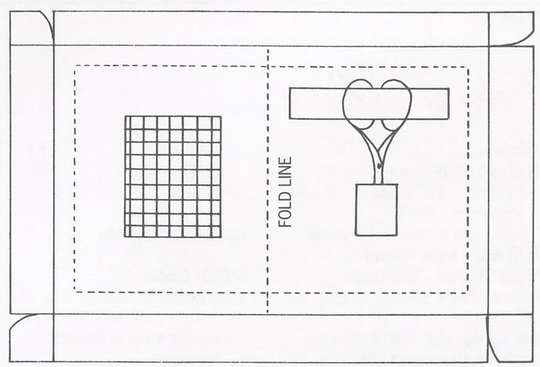
On the inside piece, with the accessory pieces mounted, score and turn in to be slightly smaller than the outside piece.

With aqua flower thread, make a braid of eighteen strands of thread 12 inches long. Tie a knot in one end of the bundled thread, separate the strands into three even bundles and braid to the other end. Tie a second knot in that end. Now tie two knots side by side in the center of the braid and cut the braid in half between these center knots to form two braids about six inches long.

Put the two linen pieces together, right sides out, and blind stitch together. Fasten the braids in place to form a tie fastener as you stitch.



Front piece, face down



Inside piece with needlecase, scissors strap and thimble pouch mounted

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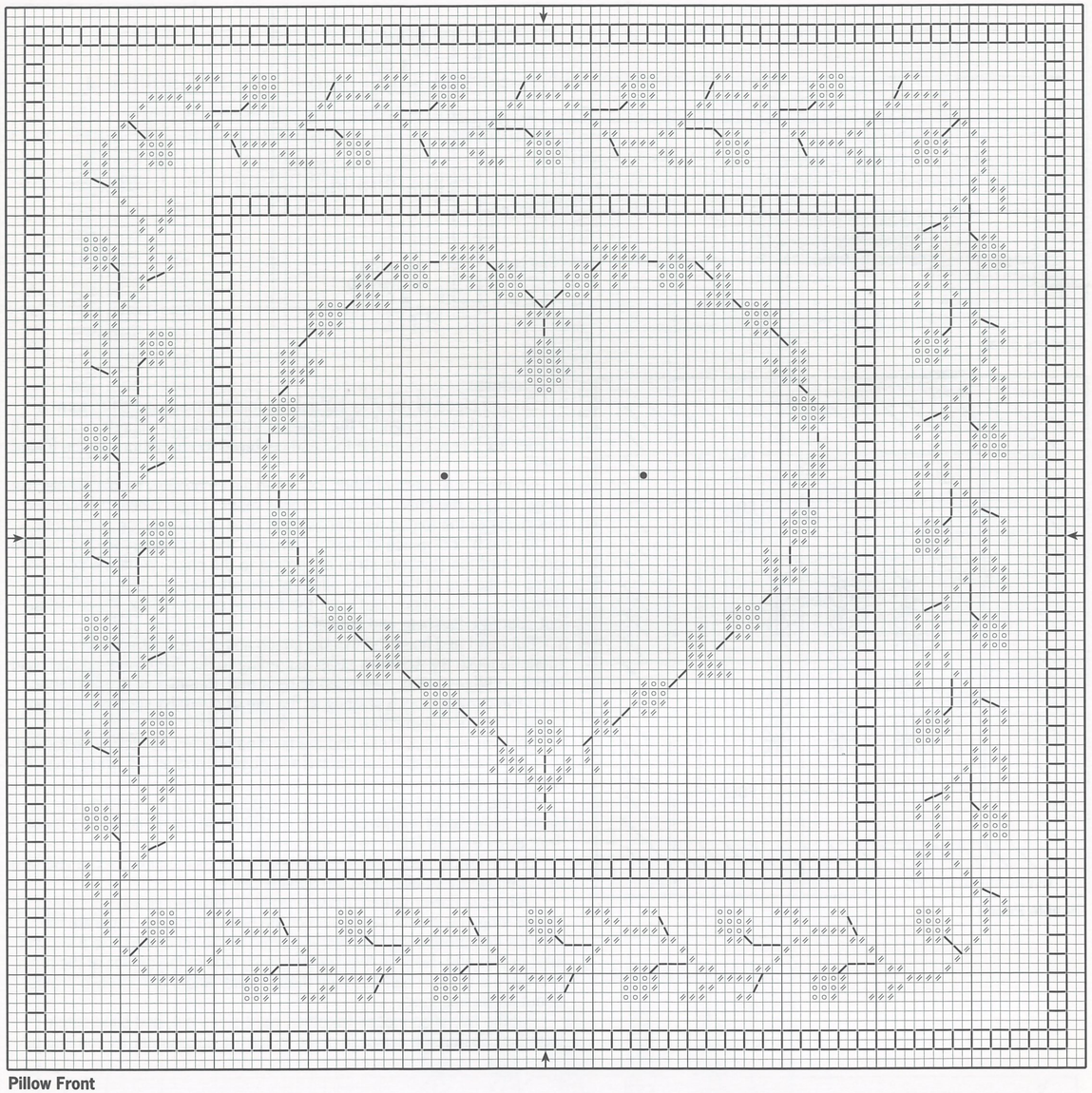

Pillow Front

Ringbearer's Pillow

Materials:
28 count white linen –
2 pieces - 15" x 15"
10 inch pillow form
¼" pink satin ribbon – 1½ yards
50/2 white linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.
White and pink sewing thread

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

Color	GTFT	DMC
○ Pink	260	776
⫽ Green	466	3052

Backstitch: green

Stitch Code:
▢ 4-Sided stitch (see pg. 26) – use 1 strand of linen thread in the needle over 4 threads of fabric.

Procedure:
Complete the design for the pillow top on one piece of linen according to chart.
Attach pink ribbon with pink sewing thread. (•)
Complete the same border design (four sided stitch borders and roses) on the remaining piece of linen fabric.
Chart the date on the dotted line on the chart (pillow bottom) (see pgs. 21) and center this design inside the border of the second linen piece.
Score four sides of both pieces ¾" from outer 4-sided stitch border. Trim to ½" from scored line.
With right sides together, stitch top and sides together, leaving the bottom open. Turn inside out.
Insert pillow form, turn in borders and blind stitch to close.

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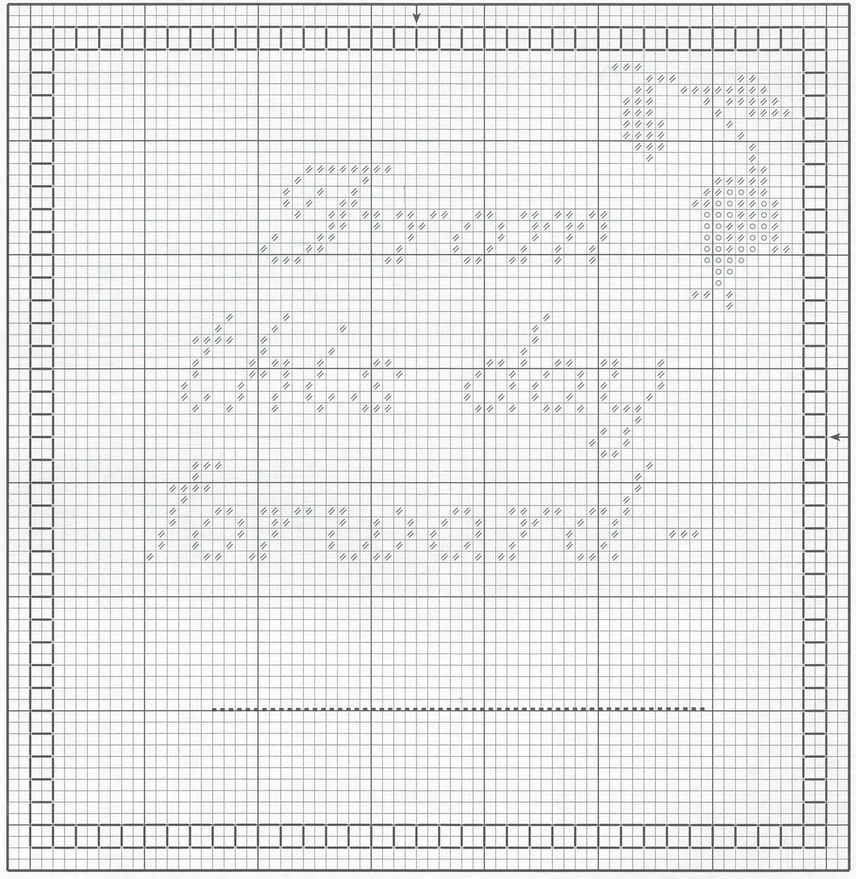
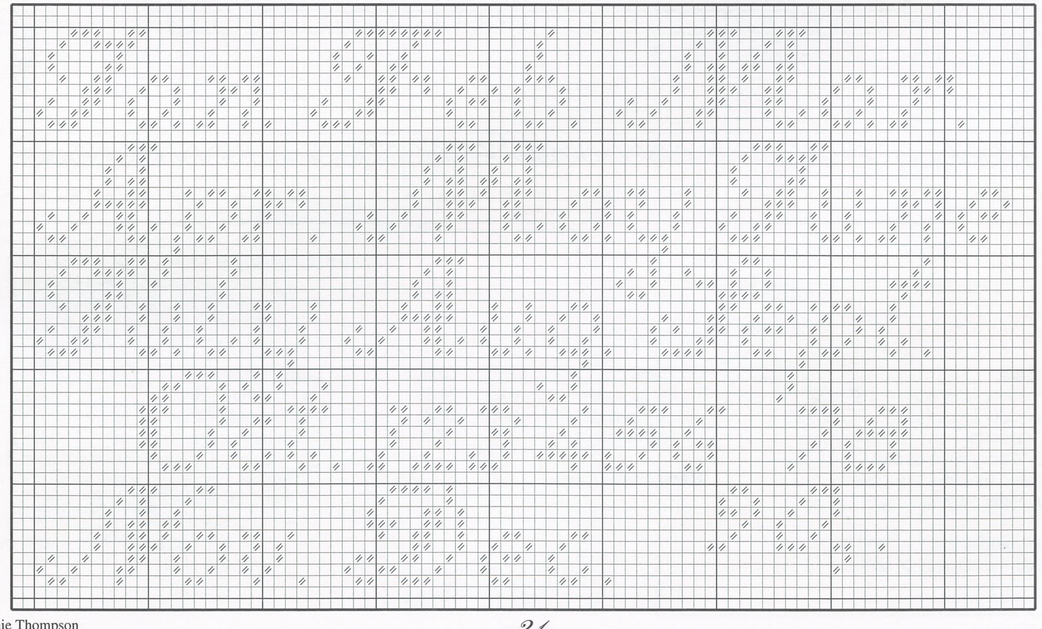


Pillow Back



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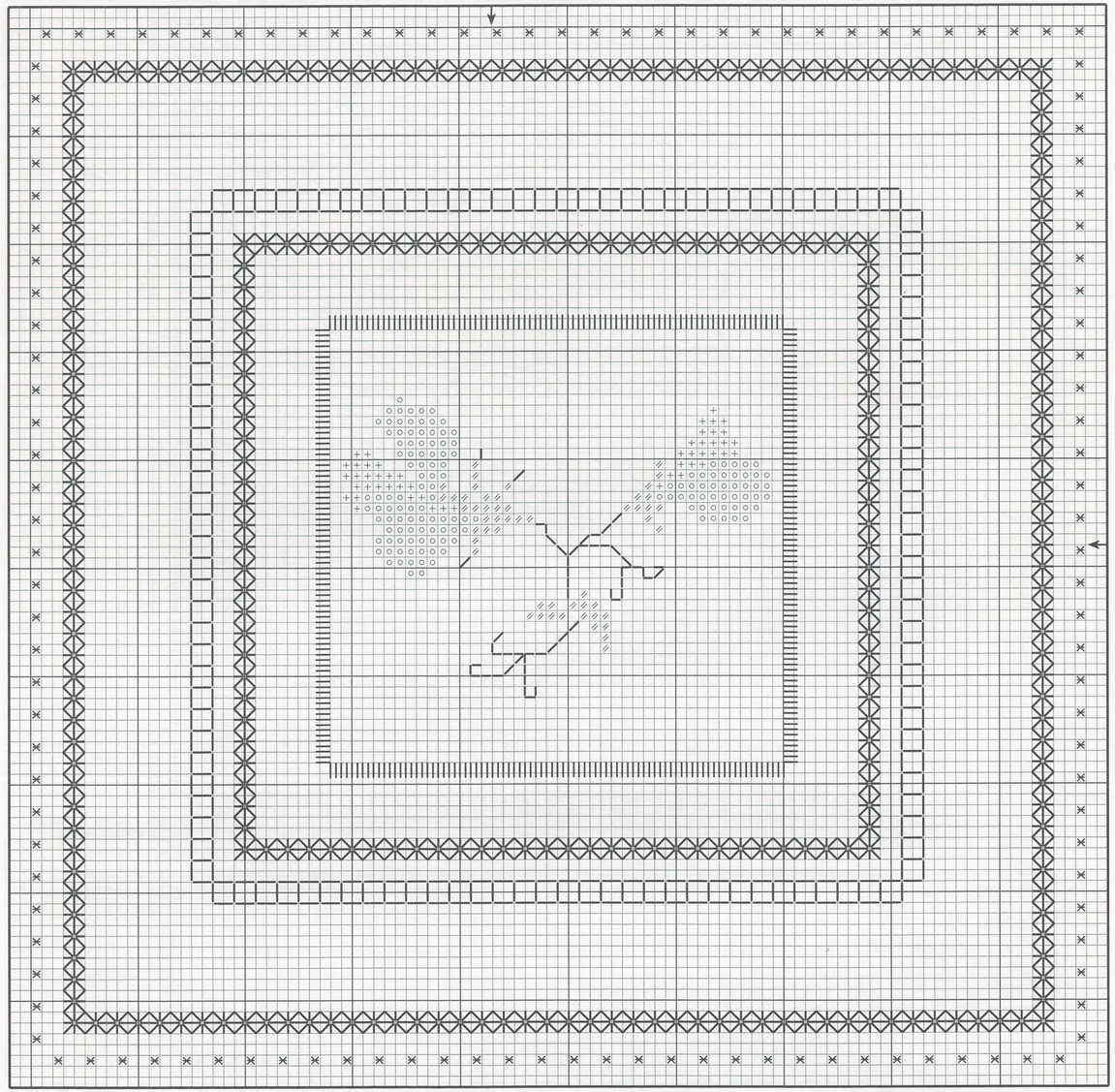

Handkerchief Case

Materials:
28 count ivory linen – 13" x 22"
Lavender lining fabric – 13" x 22"
$\frac{1}{16}$" lavender satin ribbon – $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards
50/2 ivory linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.
Lavender sewing thread

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

Color	GTFT	DMC
○ Lt. lavender	615	3689
+ Dk. lavender	605	3688
⫽ Green	433	704

Backstitch: green

Stitch Code:
✳ Algerian eyelet (see pg. 28) – use 1 strand of linen thread.
✕ Palestrina knot (see pg. 27) – use 1 strand of lt. lavender flower thread.
||| Pins (see pg. 27) – use 1 strand of linen thread over 3 threads of fabric.
▢ 4–Sided stitch with $\frac{1}{16}$" ribbon (see pg. 26) – use 1 strand of linen thread over 4 threads of fabric.

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Dandelion Placemat

Materials:
28 count natural linen – 17" x 21"
50/2 natural linen thread
Flower Thread – see code.

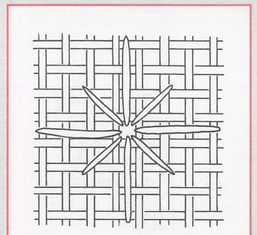
Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

Color	GTFT	DMC
✳ White	100	White
○ Olive Green	406	733
+ Green	409	3011
▲ Blue Green	451	3363
• Dk. Green	421	935

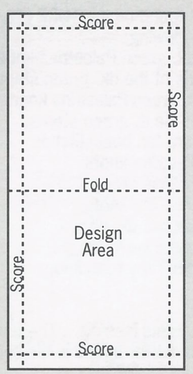
Stitch Code:
✳ Algerian eyelet variation* (see diagram at right) – white flower thread, 2 strands (4 strands of DMC). (See pg.28.)
*Algerian eyelets are not connected. Complete each stitch individually.

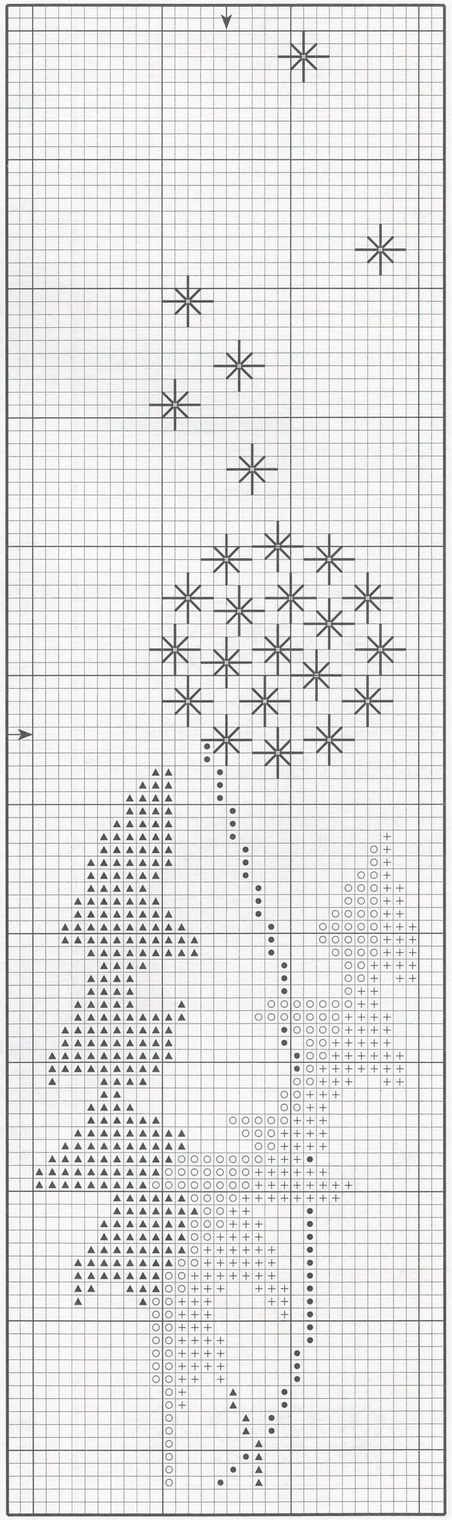
Procedure:
Position design in lower right corner of linen fabric. (The center of the design is $4\frac{1}{2}$" from the right side and $7\frac{1}{2}$" from the bottom edge of the fabric.)

Make a narrow hem 8 threads wide. (See pgs. 31 & 21.) Bottom and right sides of finished placemat are $1\frac{1}{2}$" from design. Finished size is 13" x 17".



Handkerchief Procedure:
Fold fabric in half – center the design on the bottom half.
Stitch the design according to the chart.
Score linen 1" away from Palestrina knots, on all sides as shown. Score the back to match the front.
Trim and turn under $\frac{3}{8}$" margin on all sides.
Trim and turn in lining to be slightly smaller than the linen.
Pin in place, wrong sides together.
Pin a diagonal ribbon across one half of the inside case (to hold hankies in place).
Pin 8" ribbon ties in place for closure.
Blind stitch lining to linen using lavender sewing thread.





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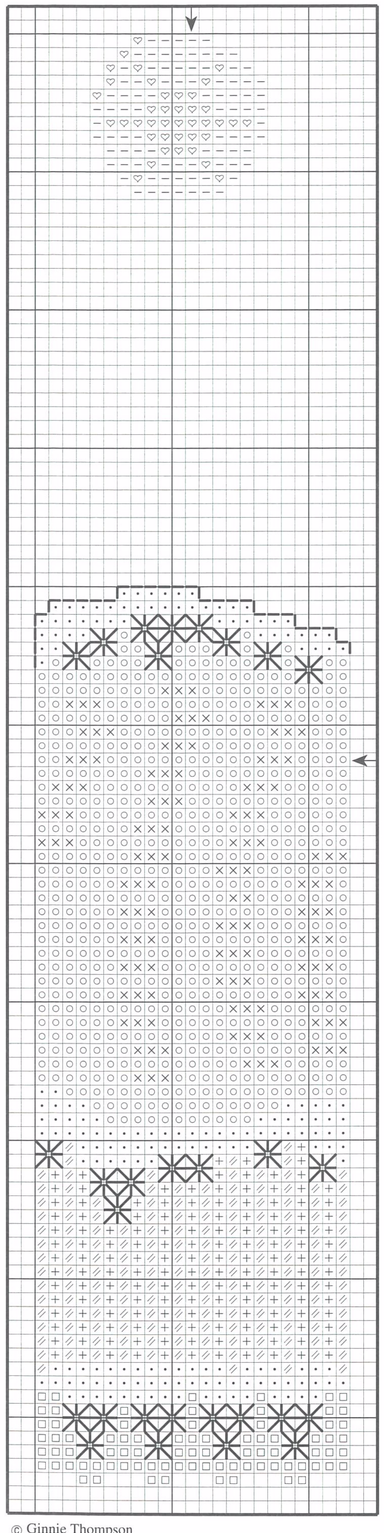

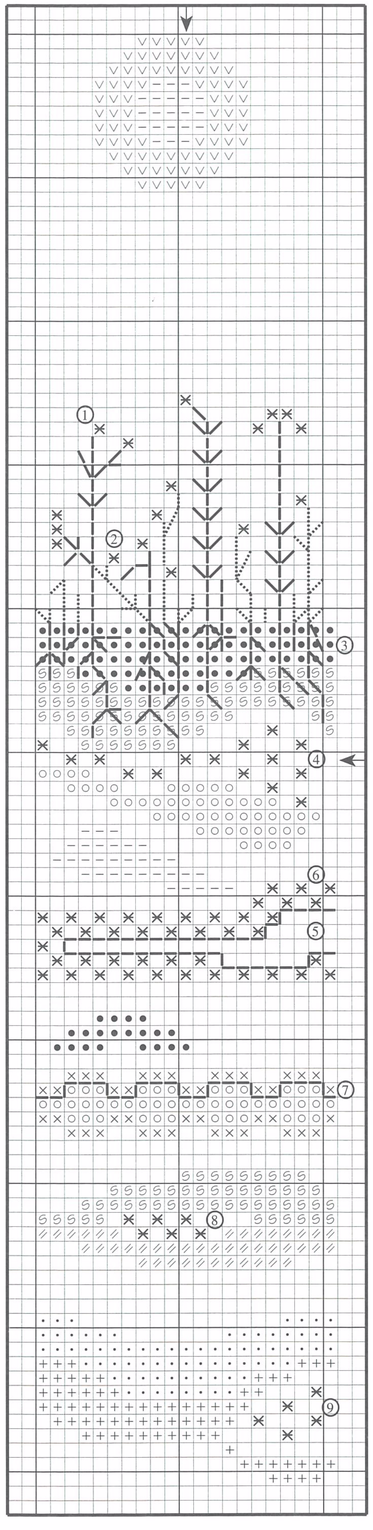

Surf & Turf

Materials:
28 count white linen – 1 piece, 13" x 8", each design
Flower Thread – see code.

Thread Code: use 1 strand in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

Surf

	Color	GTFT	DMC
♡	Pink	265	335
–	Orange	355	946
·	White	100	0
○	Lt. Aqua	424	913
×	Dk. Aqua	427	911
+	Lt. Green	439	3348
⫽	Med. Green	442	3347
□	Tan	400	372

Backstitch: dk. aqua

Stitch Code:
✳ Algerian eyelet (see pg. 28) – use 1 strand of white flower thread.

Procedure for Surf and Turf:
Stitch each piece according to the charts. Press, mount, and frame.

Turf

	Color	GTFT	DMC
V	Orange	355	946
–	Pink	265	335
⫽	Dk. green	454	3346
•	Dk. brown	725	3031
·	Tan	400	372
ᔕ	Blue	575	336
○	Lavender	625	316
×	Lt. green	439	3348
+	Med. brown	715	610

Backstitch:
– – green
····· lt. green

The numbers found on the TURF chart refer to the following:
1. Make dk. green Palestrina knots at the ends of the dk. green stems.
2. Make lt. green Palestrina knots at ends of the lt. green stems.
3. Roots are tan backstitches.
4. Tan Palestrina knots
5. Backstitch is orange.
6. Tan Palestrina knots
7. Backstitch is dk. brown.
8. Pink Palestrina knots
9. Lavender Palestrina knots

Stitch Code:
× Palestrina knots (see pg. 27) – use 1 strand of flower thread in the needle (2 strands of DMC).

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Nun's Stitch (Open Sided Square Stitch)

Imagine that it is the period between World War I and II and you and your steamer trunk are abroad for a European tour. High on your list of things to buy are handmade, CONVENT made, lingerie items. The camisole, slip, teddy or gown you select may be crepe de chine, or silk, fine lawn or satin; the color may be ivory, pale peach, pink, blue or yellow. Whatever you choose, the tiny hand stitches will be exquisite. The seams of your lingerie will be a narrow sixteenth of an inch wide, yet they will not ravel because they are edged with the "Nun's stitch."

The Nun's stitch adapts readily to evenweave linen and is easy to learn. Once you master this stitch you are forever liberated from lining or hemming such items as bookmarks.

Here are the ground rules:
The Nun's stitch consists of two horizontal stitches and two vertical stitches (Fig. 59).

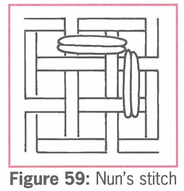


Figure 59: Nun's stitch

Every stitch that shows on the front of the fabric is made TWICE.

The needle changes direction on the stitch each time.

The Nun's stitch is an easy stitch. Use no hoop and stitch with a sewing motion, rather than a stab stitch. Especially remember a little chant as you stitch; one-two, change direction – one-two, change direction. This reminds you to take one stitch, then stitch number two, changing the direction of the needle. Each stitch is pulled tightly.

In this book the Nun's stitch is worked over two threads of linen with one strand of linen thread. Begin with a knotless waste knot. As you come to the end of your thread, leave a tail out of the way on the front of the fabric. After the new thread has been worked into Nun's stitches already made you can later end the first parked thread in the direction of the new stitches, thereby avoiding pulling a hole where one thread ends and the next begins. **(See basic techniques, pgs. 9 & 10.)**

How to start: Begin with a knotless waste knot, thread tail on the front of the fabric.

Bring the needle up at the exact point where surplus fabric is to be cut away (Fig. 60).

It is helpful to begin southwest of a vertical thread.
Work toward yourself.
1 – The needle comes up where the surplus fabric is to be cut off (Fig. 60).
2 – Take a stitch again but change direction of the needle (Fig. 61).
3 – Be sure to take this stitch (Fig. 62).
4 – Take a stitch again, change direction (diagonal occurs only once – Fig. 63).
5 – Repeat steps 1, 2, 3, 4 (Fig. 64).
6 – How to turn a corner: work toward yourself; eliminate diagonal stitch (Fig. 65).

To start a new thread each time – see Park & Stitch, page 10.

Cut close to stitching or if that is too scary pull the thread next to the Nun's stitch and cut on that line. (See last diagram.)

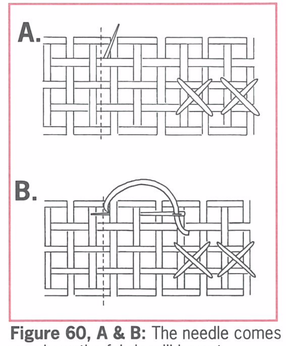


Figure 60, A & B: The needle comes up where the fabric will be cut.

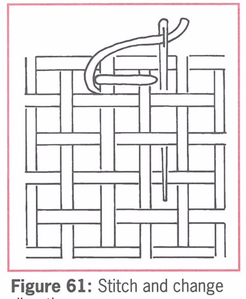


Figure 61: Stitch and change directions.

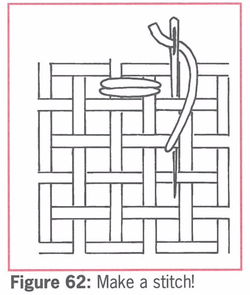


Figure 62: Make a stitch!

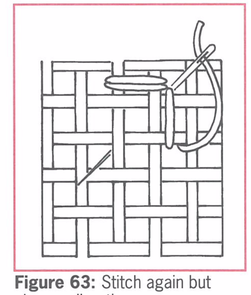


Figure 63: Stitch again but change direction.

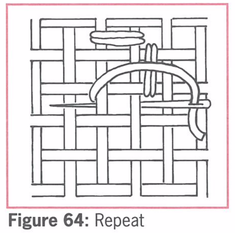


Figure 64: Repeat

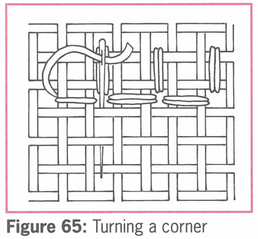
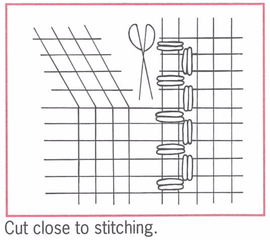


Figure 65: Turning a corner


Cut close to stitching.

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Four-Sided Stitch

General

Every stitch is made straight on the front, forming a box (Fig. 66), diagonal on the back (Fig. 67). Actually, as the stitch is tightened the stitches on the front slant (Fig. 68), but they are STITCHED straight to begin with.

The threads are pulled together tightly but not bunched on top of each other. The aim is to make an eyelet design or pattern with the HOLES formed by pulling the stitches. (Fig. 68).

For this reason, the four sided stitch is usually worked in thread that matches the background fabric. Matching linen thread to linen fabric is best because the thread color is not obvious but blends into the background and the linen is strong enough to pull tightly.

It is important for the stitching on the reverse side to be diagonal (Fig. 67). This gives the necessary tension to form the "hole." It also means that the four sided stitch can be worked in two different ways. The least awkward way to do a straight row of four sided stitches is shown in Fig. 69-72 following. This is also the diagram to follow for a corner turning left.

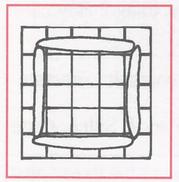

Figure 66: Stitches are made straight on front.

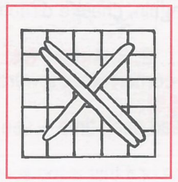

Figure 67: Stitches are made diagonally on the back.

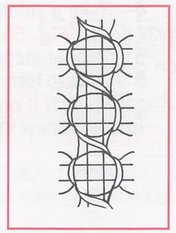

Figure 68: Straight stitches slant as they are tightened.

Start with a knotless waste knot.

1 – Come up at the top left of the stitch, go over four threads* and go down at top right, crossing diagonally over the back and bringing the needle up four threads below at bottom left (Fig. 69).

Pull as tightly as possible (which won't be very tight until later when you fasten in your thread tail).

2 – Go down at the top left, up at the bottom right, pull tight (Fig. 70).

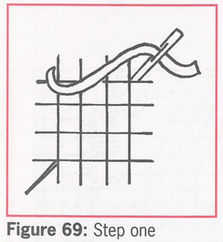

Figure 69: Step one

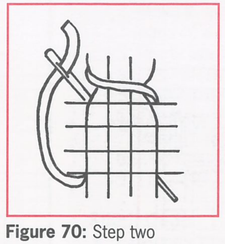

Figure 70: Step two

3 – Go down at the top right, up at the bottom left, pull tight (Fig. 71).

4 – Go down at the bottom right, up at the bottom left (of the next stitch). The stitch that closes one box is the top of the next box (Fig. 72).

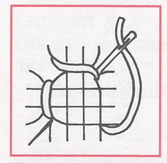

Figure 71: Step three

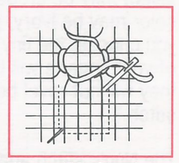

Figure 72: Step four

5 – Turning a Corner: On completion of the last stitch in the row, turn the fabric so the next side will be worked toward you from top to bottom (Fig. 73). This makes a long diagonal stitch at the turn which provides the necessary tension.

6 – This directional guide (Fig. 74) will help to keep the stitches in the correct order while learning to do the stitch.

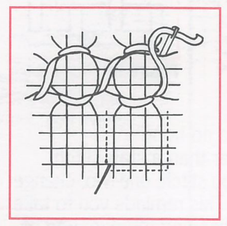

Figure 73: Turning a corner

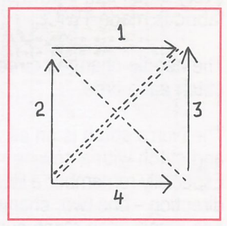

Figure 74: Directional guide

(Fig. 75 & 76) This figure shows working toward oneself in a straight row then turning to the left and again working toward oneself.

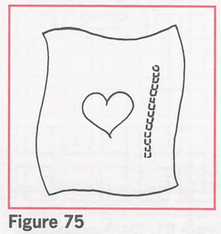

Figure 75

Working toward oneself

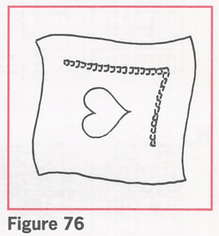

Figure 76

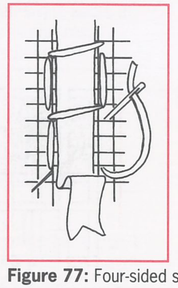

Figure 77: Four-sided stitch over a ribbon

Variation: Four-sided stitch with Ribbon. Work the stitch in the normal manner but lay in ribbon as you go (Fig. 77). Do not pull these stitches.

For information on continuing threads, see Park & Stitch, page 10.

*The four-sided stitch can also be worked over three threads in each direction.

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Pins

One Danish embroidery teacher calls this stitch "pins"; a Danish author calls it "lines" and a very proper name would be pulled satin stitch, although it is pulled only slightly. Whatever its name, it is an obliging little stitch. Work it left to right or right to left or alternately each row. Work over three threads or work over four threads. This very simple stitch is especially useful as a border.

Use a knotless waste knot to begin. This stitch does not start well at corners so begin at the center line on the chart. Right handed stitchers will see the needle best when working from right to left (Fig. 78).

Figure 78: Pins (pulled satin stitch)

Stitches will look straight on the front (Fig. 79), slanted on the back (Fig. 80).

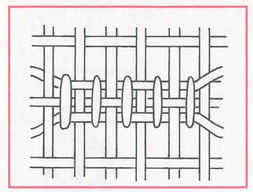


Figure 79: Straight stitches on the front

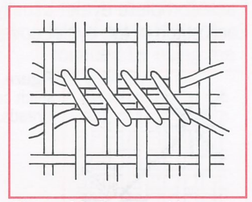
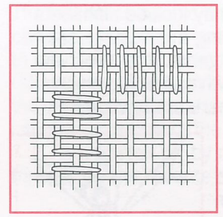
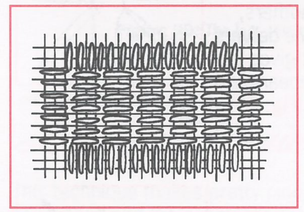


Figure 80: Reverse side



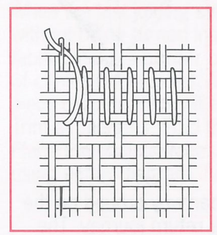
At a corner stitch, come up in the same primary hole a second time (Fig. 81), turn the fabric and continue as before.

Figure 81: Corner stitch



In a configuration like the one illustrated (Fig. 82) with long outer rows and short inner rows, work the outer rows first.

Figure 82: Work outer rows first.



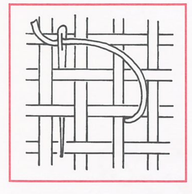
The short inner rows are stitched last. Stitch one short row right to left, drop down to the next row and stitch left to right, continue in this manner, working back and forth (Fig. 83).

Figure 83: Short inner rows

French Knots or Palestrina Knots

French knots have the charm of Maurice Chevalier, the appeal of French perfume. However, the traditional technique for making French knots is not appropriate for counted thread work. To wrap the embroidery thread around the needle and pierce the fabric would be incorrect. What is needed is a counted thread technique and luckily there is one called the counted Palestrina knot. Made with this technique each knot is pretty, each knot is even and exactly like its counterparts.

The knot may be made with either one strand of flower thread or one strand of linen thread, when using 28 count linen.



Begin with a knotless waste knot (see Basic Techniques) and bringing the needle up in a big hole by a vertical thread (optional but helpful), make a half cross stitch RIGHT TO LEFT (Fig. 84).

Figure 84: Palestrina knot steps 1-2-3-4-5

Slip the needle under the half cross stitch (DO NOT SEW INTO THE FABRIC), pull straight up from the fabric making a knot (Fig. 85).

Again slip the needle under the half cross stitch and over the thread loop (Fig. 86) making a second knot.
You have now used 3 of 4 corners of a square. Gently place the needle in the fourth corner (Fig. 87) thereby centering your French knot (Fig. 88).

Figure 85

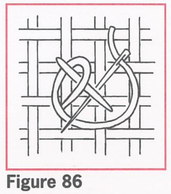


Figure 86

Figure 87

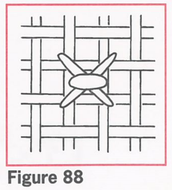


Figure 88

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Algerian Eyelet

Early American samplers frequently include alphabets in the Algerian eyelet stitch. Doing this star-like stitch is almost like participating in a simple game. It is a link with stitchers in Puritan and Colonial days who must have played the same game in doing this stitch. There are few such unchanged links with the past: breadmaking maybe (but we have modern advantages), darning, birth and death. I suppose every pregnant woman feels that long chain of mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers, extending back to Eve, when she delivers her child. The Algerian eyelet gives the same connection with our forebears and is a lot easier than childbirth (Fig. 89).

Figure 89: A link with the past

These are the game rules:
*Work the stitches counterclockwise.
*Work each stitch from the outer perimeter INTO the center. Think of it as a swimming pool into which the needle dives (Fig. 90).

Figure 90: Work each stitch into the center.

The game is to do the Algerian eyelet partway around on the initial journey, the remaining part on the return journey. The changing place is WHEREVER THE EYELETS TOUCH. The object of the game is to make the embroidery come out alike on both sides of the fabric.

Correctly done, the stitch is a square wheel with an open center. Pull gently on each stitch, straight out from the center.

Start your thread with a knotless waste knot. (Both beginning and ending threads are later run underneath the eyelet as illustrated, one thread traveling clockwise and the other counterclockwise (Fig. 91).) Each stitch of the eyelets is worked from the outside in: the needle dives into the center of the stitch (Fig. 92).

Figure 91: Ending thread tails

Figure 92: Algerian eyelet

Each complete eyelet usually covers four threads each way. Each stitch of the eyelet covers two threads (Fig. 93 & 94).

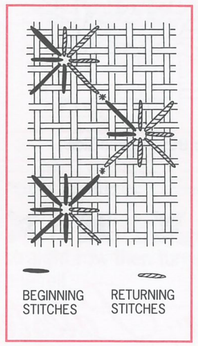

Figure 93: Each stitch covers two threads.

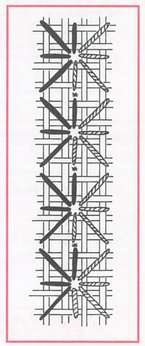

Figure 94: The changing place is at the asterisk.

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Counted Chain Stitch

Counted chain stitches are particularly useful for joining the edges of pincushions (Fig. 95).

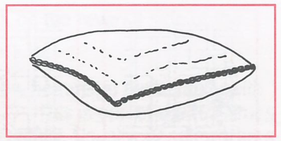

Figure 95: Pincushion joined with the chain stitch

Begin with a knotless waste knot, bringing the needle up at a corner of the pincushion. It may help to score the linen where the stitching line is to be. The needle comes up in a hole, a loop of thread is made and the needle reenters the same hole already used and goes under two threads with the needle coming out on top of the loop or chain (Fig. 96 & 97). Keep the shape of the chain rounded by using the left thumb.

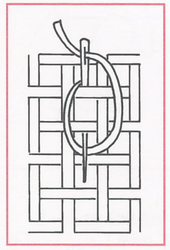

Figure 96: Counted chain stitch

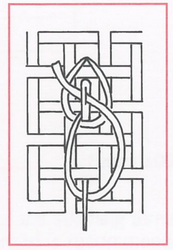

Figure 97

It is important that the chain look continuous with no apparent breaks. Read carefully Park & Stitch, on page 10.

To turn a corner place the needle as shown in the diagram (Fig. 98). Turn the fabric 90 degrees (it's OK, this is not cross stitch) and continue stitching.

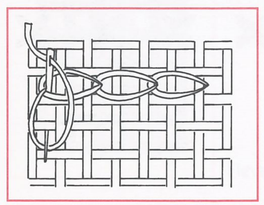

Figure 98: Turning a corner

The last stitch should also look continuous so that it is impossible to see the starting or ending place. Go around under both threads of the very first chain stitch and back into the same hole of the last stitch (Fig. 99). Fasten off by catching threads on the reverse side.

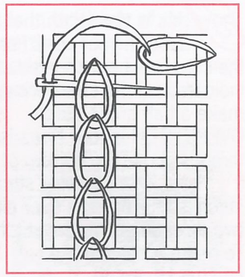

Figure 99: The last stitch

Lacing a Chain Stitch

This technique makes pretty pincushions. The embroidery is first ironed and the assembling is done wrong sides together. When the last joining stitch is taken the pincushion is complete without being turned inside out and without any mussing of the fabric. Make a border of chain stitches with an equal number of chains on all sides. Make an exact duplicate on a separate piece of linen which will become the underside of the pincushion. Trim all margins. Fold the margins in along the chain stitches. Place the chain stitches side by side. Lace the chains together using either diagram (Fig. 100 & 101).

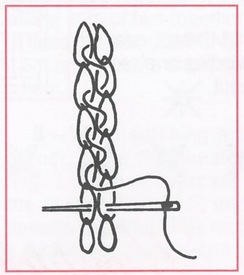

Figure 100: Lacing the chain – method 1

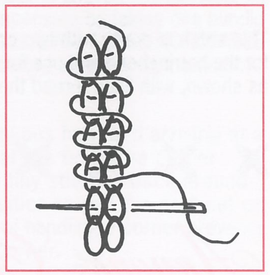

Figure 101: Lacing the chain – method 2

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Herringbone

This is the stitch that is used to sew the label in your coat. For this book's projects the stitch will be a counted stitch. Starting where indicated on the chart bring the needle up and make a half cross stitch (Fig. 102). The OVERSTITCH is four threads to the left and four threads above the bottom of the half cross stitch (Fig. 103). Use a sewing stitch motion. Now each stitch is four threads over either left or right and two threads above the stitch below (Fig. 104). To make a column like Fig. 105 the beginning stitch is reversed.

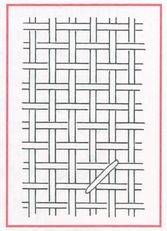

Figure 102: Herringbone step 1

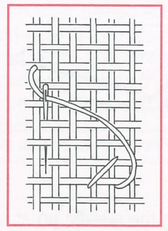

Figure 103: Step 2

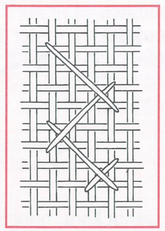

Figure 104: Step 3

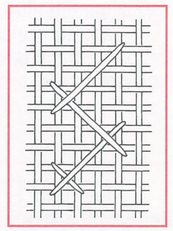

Figure 105: Column reversed

Winding or Wrapping the Herringbone

No sewing is done here. The needle comes up at the top of the column of herringbone stitches. The place is indicated by a small x. The thread winds over the crossed stitch and under the long thread to go over the crossed stitch on the other side, under the next long threads, over the next crossed stitch and so on (Fig. 106). DO NOT PIERCE the fabric. Simply wind the thread under the long thread of the herringbone stitch and over the crossed stitch. When the end of the column is reached turn to the back and fasten the thread in the tiny stitches on the back.

This stitch is pretty with two colors of thread; one for the herringbone and one for the winding or else, as shown, with linen thread throughout.

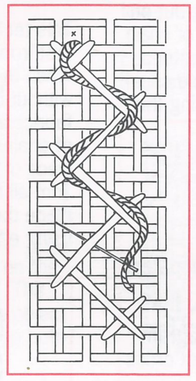

Figure 106: Wrapping the herringbone

Anyone Can Hemstitch

Everyone should! Hemstitching is quick, simple, rhythmic and very effective. It is a little dance with the needle; around and down, around and down. It is appropriate to hemstitch placemats, coasters, doilies, runners, napkins, tablecloths, because they all require hems, but simple hemstitch may also be used for the elegant finishing of bookmarks, needlecases, and hangings.

Hemstitch can be a book in itself. Here, however, is the simplest method, that is favored by the Danes. No threads are cut and drawn, therefore, nothing is irrevocable. (I like that in a stitch!)

The aim in hemstitching is to pull threads together into groups so that a series of tiny, beadlike openings mark the top of the hem (Fig. 107), at the same time sewing the hem to the background fabric (Fig. 108).

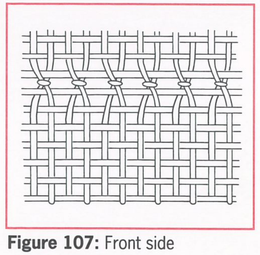

Figure 107: Front side

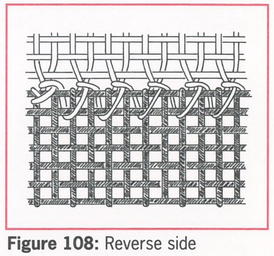

Figure 108: Reverse side

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Anyone Can Hemstitch ~~ continued

Here is how to hemstitch: Work on the reverse side of the fabric.

1 – Hold the hem (see narrow hemming) horizontally with your thumb on the hem (Fig. 109). This is one of the few times a needleworker will stitch horizontally. Usually, needleworkers stitch toward themselves.

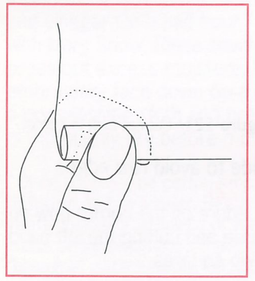

Figure 109: Holding the hem

2 – Lay the tail of the stitching thread in the fold of the hem (Fig. 110). Linen thread is recommended for strength. Use a thread weight equal to one thread of the background fabric. Take an anchoring back stitch over one thread.

3 – With the needle, pick up two threads in the body of the fabric (Fig. 110). Pull together gently.

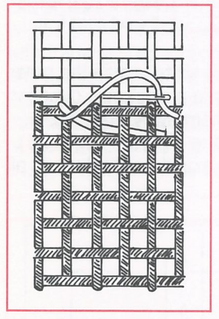

Figure 110: Thread tail in the fold – step 1

4 – Pick up two (or whatever number is called for in the project instructions) threads of the HEM to the right of the first stitch (Fig. 111).

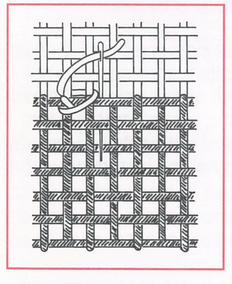

Figure 111: Step 2

5 – Pick up the next two threads in the body of the work (Fig. 112), pull gently; pick up two threads in the hem (Fig. 113). Individual stitches are made with the needle going right to left, but the line of stitching proceeds left to right.

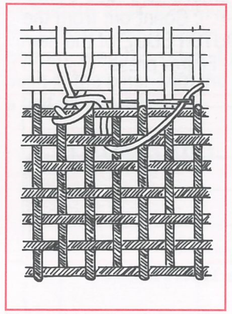

Figure 112: Step 3

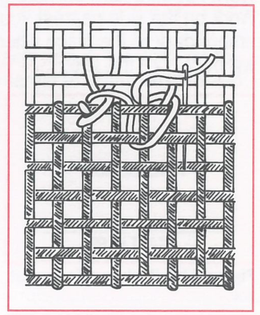

Figure 113: Step 4

6 – When hemming straight across a hanging, finish stitching by taking a few overcast stitches in the hem, running the tail back into the hem fold for an inch or so and cutting the thread.

7 – Compensating. About an inch and a half from the end of the hem, stop and count the remaining number of threads to be pulled together. If the number is uneven and you are pulling sets of two together, compensate by taking one bundle of three threads. COMPENSATING IS ALWAYS LESS NOTICEABLE if accomplished a short space before a corner or the end of a hem.

8 – When stitching a continuous hem and arriving at a corner, bring the needle out at the tip of the corner (Fig. 114) then overcast with tiny stitches back around the corner (Fig. 115) into position to pull the next set of threads together. This method of handling a corner prevents a distorted, pointy, dog ear corner.

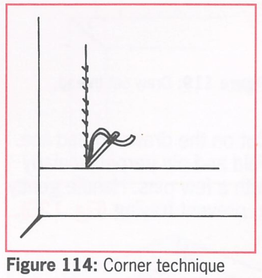

Figure 114: Corner technique

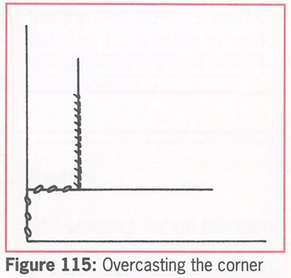

Figure 115: Overcasting the corner

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Making A Narrow Hem (up to 1")

This technique is a narrow door into a wider world of elegant needlework, especially classic, fine table linens.

First Score

Work flat on a hard surface with the embroidery face down. Work on the side nearest you (Fig. 116). Count out from the embroidery to the place where the OUTER EDGE of the hem will be. Score this line. (See page 14.) Finger press. (Fig. 117).

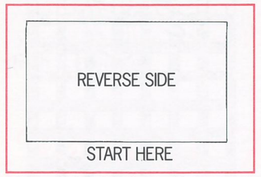


Figure 116: Work on side nearest you.

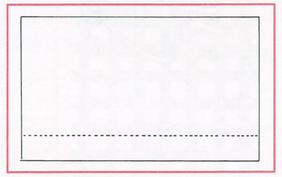


Figure 117: First score

Second Score

Decide on the depth of the hem. Six to ten threads is the usual number. For this example, let us use eight threads. (Remember we are talking THREADS not STITCHES.) Score eight threads from the first line of scoring still moving away from the embroidery (Fig. 118). Finger press.

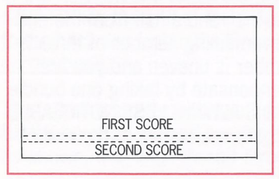


Figure 118: Second score

This time count out seven threads from the last score, still moving away from the embroidery (always one less than the depth of the hem) and WITHDRAW the eighth thread (Fig. 119).

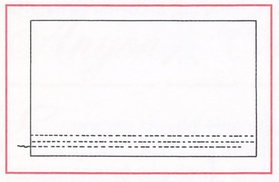
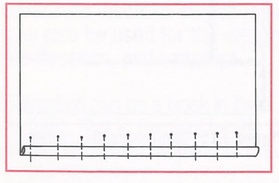


Figure 119: Draw out thread.



Cut on the drawn thread line. Fold and pin perpendicularly with a few pins. Handle gently to prevent fraying (Fig. 120).

Figure 120: Fold and pin.

Turn CLOCKWISE and repeat the entire procedure on the next side.

Turn clockwise, cut and fold until all sides are folded and pinned.

Corners

To reduce bulk in the corner, place the embroidery so that the first side is before you. Gently unfold the LEFT HAND CORNER. Study the finger pressed score lines, cut as diagrammed, two squares vertically, away from you (Fig. 121).

Figure 121: Cut out bulk in corner.

Refold, starting on the left hand side to avoid raw edges showing. Pin. Be very gentle (Fig. 122).
Turn CLOCKWISE. Repeat this procedure on the corner now on the left side. Repeat turning clockwise and cutting the left hand corner vertically away from you, two squares.

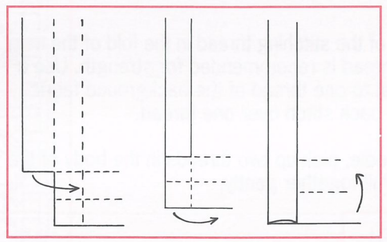


Figure 122: Refold the cut edge first.

On the last corner REFOLD (cut edge first) to match the other corners. The corners chase each other in a clockwise direction (Fig. 123). Baste in the center of the hem away from the stitching line, securing corners as in the diagram (Fig. 124). In basting, be careful to keep the hem exactly eight threads all around.

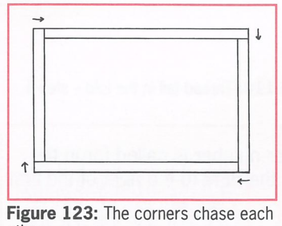


Figure 123: The corners chase each other.

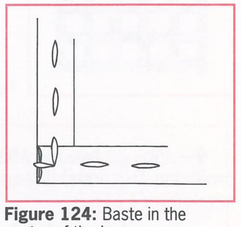


Figure 124: Baste in the center of the hem.

A good way to insure that the hem is an even number of threads on all sides is to check the first hemstitch after each corner is turned. Look at the front of the work at this point and count the threads in the hem. If the number is correct turn back to the reverse side and continue hemming. If the number of threads is not correct it may be necessary to roll the hem down with your thumb.

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Finishing and Mounting

Laundering

If it is clean, the embroidery should be placed face down on a padded white surface, covered with a quite damp white cloth, such as a man's handkerchief, and pressed well with an iron. After pressing, it should be beautiful, the fulfillment of hours of careful stitching.

If laundering is required, first soak the embroidery in cold water and vinegar for a half hour,* then wash it in lukewarm water with Ivory Snow. Rinse several times. Roll it in a white towel to press out excess moisture. Immediately unroll and lay the embroidery face down on a padded white surface. Cover with a dry pressing cloth and press well. Be sure the embroidery is thoroughly dry before mounting.

*Once upon a time cotton embroidery floss was runproof, even boilproof, but no longer. Because of laws protecting the ecology, all yarns, including needlework yarns, have reverted to less stringent levels of colorfastness. There is no cause for alarm, though, as "bleeding" occurs rarely. Should excess dye bleed, simply flush it out with repeated rinsing.

Mounting

Some finished embroidery will require an appropriate frame to set it off, one that is suited more to the embroidery than to the room in which it will be hung. Glass is not necessary and will hide the beautiful texture, but it may be desired in a much trafficked area where the embroidery might become soiled. Before visiting the framer, but after the embroidery is cleaned and pressed, lay the picture on a white surface. Using two right-angled paper shapes as a temporary mat (Fig. A), experiment with framing your embroidery until you are pleased with it. The effective center is the point you see as the center, say the experts, so the experimental method is preferred to a more mathematical approach. It is desirable to leave equal margins of the fabric at the top and sides around the design but allow a larger margin at the bottom.

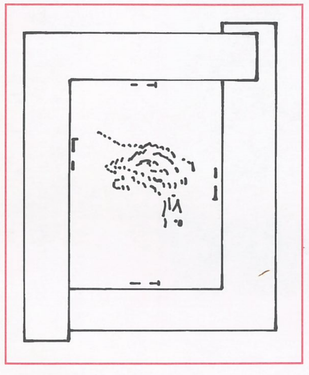


Figure A

Now mark inside the temporary mat with pins before removing the paper. Measure the embroidery lengthwise and crosswise between the pins and then add an amount for the width of a colored mat, if one is desired. Cut white matboard for the backing to these measurements.

Place the embroidery face down on a table and position the matboard. Align the top of the matboard carefully along one of the horizontal threads of the fabric. Fold over the excess fabric onto the matboard and push pins (those with rounded heads or T shape are best) into the matboard about half an inch apart, again following one of the horizontal threads. Leave the corner area loose (Fig. B). Do the top edge first, then the bottom, then the sides, turning each side of the work up to push in the pins. Trim the fabric margin to about an inch and a half all around.

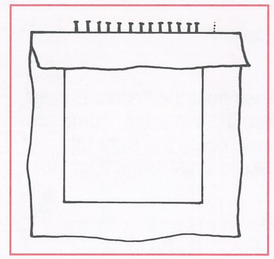


Figure B

Keeping the embroidery face down on the table, fold the corners diagonally and pin (Fig. C).

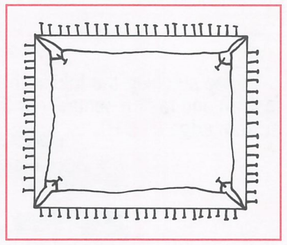


Figure C

Do not pull the fabric so hard that the matboard corners poke through. Fold the fabric to meet at the corners, forming a miter, and use pins to hold it in place. If the margins are even and the corner at a true right angle, the fabric should fold until it meets exactly (or will when stitched). The mitered fabric should not fold over itself, and the middle of the fabric margins, along the top and sides, should be flat (Fig. D). It helps to work on opposite corners simultaneously.

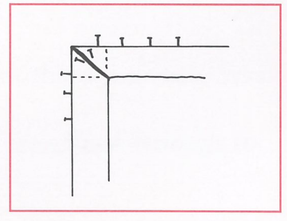
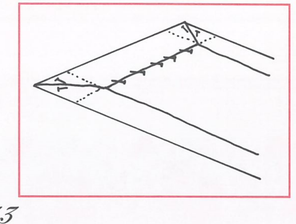


Figure D



Still working flat on the table, remove the pins from the edges and push them into the margins at a 45-degree angle, so that the margins lie flat (Fig. E).

Figure E

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Finishing and Mounting ~~ continued

Stitch the mitered corner, using thread that matches the fabric. There are various ways to do this, but one good way is to bring the needle up close to the point of the corner, leaving a long tail to be held with the thumb. Take a tiny stitch to secure this thread. Hold the needle parallel with the left edge and, coming up underneath the left fold, take a small stitch (Fig. F).

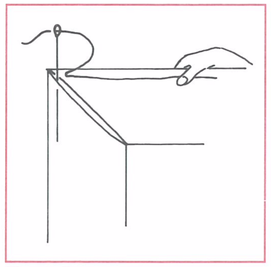
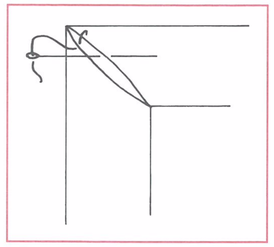


Figure F



Then hold the needle parallel with the top edge, come up underneath the right fold and take a small stitch (Fig. G).

Figure G

Continue stitching the fold in this fashion and fasten securely at the bottom edge (Fig. H).

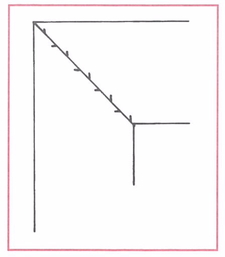


Figure H

Thread a needle from a spool of sewing thread (button and carpet or other strong thread). Pull directly from the spool and lace the fabric turnovers back and forth, top to bottom (Fig. I). This necessitates pulling quite a lot of thread from the spool, lacing, pulling more thread and pulling through stitches already laced, until the lacing is completed. Fasten securely and cut off the threaded needle. Working backward toward the spool, pull each lacing taut. Cut the thread from the spool, but leave enough thread to rethread the needle and fasten securely. Repeat the same process from side to side. This is the preferred method for mounting because it involves no glue, no staples, no pencil marks. At any time the lacing can be cut, freeing the embroidery for reframing, laundering, or what ever is needed.

The embroidery is now ready to be framed, or, if a decorative mat was chosen, to be matted and framed.

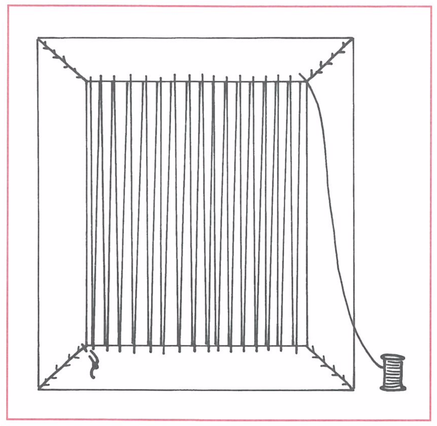


Figure I

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